Doctoral-level Students Experience Adopting Gatekeeping Roles and Responsibilities within Counselor Education

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Doctoral-level Students Experience Adopting Gatekeeping Roles and Responsibilities within Counselor Education

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education

by

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ABSTRACT

In counselor education and supervision, the term gatekeeping is used to describe the ongoing process of monitoring, evaluating, and remediating a student through their professional identity as a counselor. Gatekeeping is an ethical responsibility of counselor educators and supervisors, both faculty and doctoral-level students who supervise master’s-level students and is often identified as being one of their most difficult responsibilities. Doctoral-level supervisors play an important role in gatekeeping, although they are not involved in formal gatekeeping decisions and have not typically been the focus of research. Researchers have suggested there is a need to develop a better understanding of how doctoral-level students are prepared for gatekeeping duties and experience the gatekeeping role.

The purpose of this study was to examine how doctoral-level students describe their lived experience of adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within counselor education. Eight doctoral-level students at three accredited counselor education programs participated. A transcendental phenomenological research design was used to identity themes and describe the participants’ experiences. These revealed that doctoral-level students felt unprepared for their roles and responsibilities. The findings suggest that counselor education programs should improve the training and support of doctoral-level supervisors. Implications and recommendations for counselor education programs, counselor educators, and doctoral-level students are included.
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important. I thank my participants. Thank you for trusting me, I am grateful for your honesty, and vulnerability. It was an honor to hear your stories.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all who value accountability, integrity, and fairness. To gatekeepers, may you remain committed to the welfare of others, and ensuring the integrity of your profession. To counselor educators who value gatekeeping and supporting professional development: never question the importance of your role. To doctoral-level students, may you find your voice, and ability to speak up!
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Many students come to the counseling profession with enthusiasm and a deep commitment to helping others. Often this excitement for the profession comes from an experience in their own lives with a counselor that inspired them. These interactions with counselors lead students to begin their own journey into a helping profession through a degree program in counselor education. However, while enthusiasm and a strong sense of duty to others are integral components of becoming a counselor, there are many other skills and qualities necessary to developing a professional identity as a counselor. While many students admitted into a counselor education and supervision program (CES) may excel academically, there are a multitude of reasons why a student may not be suited to the counseling profession. It is the role of the counselor educator to guide students through their educational development for them to become competent, ethical, and successful practitioners within the counseling field. However, the question of how to assess problems of professional competency (PPC) and which processes and procedures should be enacted to address students exhibiting PPC poses a particularly difficult quandary for counselor educators.

The percentage of students who exhibit PPC within CES programs has been estimated to be as high as 2 out of every 10, or 21% (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006). Problematic students are addressed through the process of gatekeeping. Gatekeeping is described as an ongoing process throughout their academic career in which a student’s appropriateness for the profession is assessed (Ziomek-Daigle & Bailey, 2010). Often this assessment includes addressing deficiencies, repeating coursework or practicums, and in some rare cases, students are prevented from entering the profession altogether (Ziomek-Daigle & Bailey, 2010). Despite the importance of gatekeeping within CES, only 38% of counselor educators report receiving formal training
from the program where they are employed on how to intervene with problematic students (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016). Counseling students, faculty, and counselor education and supervision (CES) doctoral-level students have all identified gatekeeping as a major concern within the field, as well as reported dissatisfaction with the overall quality of gatekeeping within the field (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013; Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016; Dollarhide et al., 2013; Swank & Smith-Adcock, 2014). Doctoral-level students struggle with knowing what to do in gatekeeping, yet they feel pressure to evaluate supervisees, knowing they are evaluated on their performance as an evaluator (Corley et al., 2020). Included in this chapter is an introduction to the problem to be addressed by the study, the purpose of the study, research questions, and an overview of the methodology. A rationale for the study and a definition of relevant terms is also included.

Statement of the Problem and Need for the Study

Several professional bodies for counselor educators and supervisors use accreditation and publish best practices to ensure consistent organizational standards across CES programs. The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), the American Counseling Association (ACA), the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), and the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) all use a variety of methods to ensure programs and students abide by their organizational standards. One of the core tenets of CES is to protect the public from potential harm of poor or inadequate treatment (CACREP, 2016). This protection is achieved through gatekeeping procedures which assess “students’ competency for professional practice, including remediation and termination as appropriate” (ACA, 2014, p. 20). Despite CACREP’s and the ACA’s inclusion of gatekeeping as an important component of a counselor educator’s role, gatekeeping in CES remains a major concern among researchers and educators (Schuermann et al., 2018; Ziomek-Daigle &
Christensen, 2010). There continues to be significant gaps within the literature pertaining to gatekeeping in CES. There are gaps regarding gatekeeping procedures, how doctoral-level students are involved in gatekeeping, and how professional development influences gatekeeping.

There is limited consensus within counselor education literature regarding the process and proper procedures for gatekeeping and how to appropriately protect the profession from students who exhibit PPCs. Terminology, procedures, and assessment tools vary greatly among CES programs (Brown, 2013; Crawford & Gilroy, 2013). Factors related to assessment, process, and outcome of gatekeeping procedures are not yet well-established (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016; Rust et al., 2013).

Additionally, the majority of research literature related to gatekeeping has focused on faculty and master’s-level students. Doctoral-level supervisors play an important role in gatekeeping, but, have not typically been the focus of research. When doctoral-level students have been the focus of research, it has often been from the perspective of their own exhibition of deficiencies which must be addressed, rather than their roles and experiences as gatekeepers within a counselor education program (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2019; Swank & Smith-Adcock, 2014). As such, the roles and experiences of doctoral-level supervisors are not well established (DeDiego & Burgin, 2016; Rapp et al., 2018), nor is the manner in which doctoral-level students are trained and supported in developing the gatekeeper role (Rapp et al., 2018).

Formal policies for gatekeeping are required by ACA and CACREP (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016), but these policies are not outlined or standardized, leaving counselor educators and supervisors with little direction on how to design and implement gatekeeping procedures. Additionally, counselor educators, students, and supervisors express strong reactions towards the topic of gatekeeping (Foster et al., 2014; Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016; Schuermann et al., 2017).
Counselor educators and supervisors face significant barriers to implementing successful gatekeeping procedures and are reluctant to engage in the process for several reasons. The fear of litigation is frequently identified as a major barrier to gatekeeping (Crawford & Gilroy, 2013; Schuermann et al., 2018). Negative student evaluations and academic appeals have also been identified as barriers to gatekeeping (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Gaubatz & Vera, 2002). From a sample of 370 counselor educators, Brown-Rice and Furr (2016) found that the sample ranked (1) feeling empathetic towards a student, (2) concerns of appearing culturally insensitive, (3) concerns regarding potential allegations of discrimination, and (4) a lack of departmental support as factors which limit the willingness of counselor educators to engage in gatekeeping. In the same sample, Brown-Rice and Furr (2016) also found that the majority (61%) of counselor educators reported they would like to have more information on how to address problematic students within their programs. Another study by Brown-Rice and Furr (2019) found a majority of 354 doctoral-level students stated that they would like more information on how to respond to PPCs. Developing a better understanding of the individual factors affecting the gatekeeping and remediation process may assist faculty and doctoral-level supervisors in developing gatekeeping policies and procedures.

There are also gaps within the gatekeeping literature as to how professional identity affects formal and informal gatekeeping processes. The ways in which professional identity affects gatekeeping are also not well established, especially regarding how doctoral-level student supervisors are prepared for and experience gatekeeping responsibilities. Doctoral studies are often the catalyst for professional identity development. Faculty status, seniority, and experience are correlated to confidence in gatekeeping, and doctoral-level students rarely have little if any of these (Schuermann, 2018).
Although previous literature calls for an increase in research related to doctoral-level supervisors and gatekeeping (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2019; DeDiego & Burgin, 2016; Rapp et al., 2018), few articles related to doctoral-level supervisors and gatekeeping have been published. A review of the literature suggests that professional development does play a role in individuals’ experiences of gatekeeping. For example, Gaubatz and Vera (2002) found that faculty rank and experience affected views towards and willingness to engage in gatekeeping. According to Schuermann et al. (2016) “years of professional experience appeared to contribute to greater confidence in the efficacy of built-in programmatic safeguards” (p. 61). Further exploration of this, particularly from the perspective of doctoral-level students who have not yet acquired years of experience, could contribute to better understanding of these experiences and how counselor educators can provide appropriate support and training.

The exact number of doctoral-level students functioning as supervisors for master’s-level counseling students is not stated within the literature. According to the CACREP website, there are currently 83 accredited counseling programs which have doctoral-level CES programs. In order to meet accreditation standards, these programs require that the program address the development of the five professional roles, including the supervisor role (CACREP, 2016). How programs address the development of the supervisor role varies, and the development of the required evaluative, remediation, and gatekeeping skills is often gained through supervision experience (DeDiego & Burgin, 2016; Rapp et al., 2018). During these experiences, doctoral-level supervisors are in a unique position to identify students with PPCs as they hold individual, weekly meetings with them, and watch or listen to counseling sessions. These interactions could reveal previously unobserved PPCs. As non-faculty members, master’s-level supervisees may feel more comfortable and be more honest with their doctoral-level supervisors regarding
potential PPCs (Corley et al., 2020). CACREP standards require that CES programs train and prepare doctoral-level students for teaching and supervisor roles while addressing the duties of these roles, including in the “assessment of supervisees’ developmental level and other relevant characteristics” and “evaluation, remediation, and gatekeeping in clinical supervision” (CACREP, 2016, p. 35). However, doctoral-level students should not make any formal determinations regarding admissions, grades, retention, and dismissal. Ultimately, it is the program’s faculty which is responsible for assessing students. CACREP’s 2016 standards in Section 4 clearly state that program faculty are responsible for the assessment of students and using these assessments to make decisions of “retention, remediation, and dismissal” (p. 18). Doctoral-level students are required to identify, evaluate, and provide feedback to faculty regarding students with PPCs, and address these concerns within supervision. Given their position as non-faculty members, meeting with counseling students while they begin clinical work, doctoral-level student supervisors may be the first to observe a PPC.

Exploring the intersection of professional identity development and gatekeeping responsibilities at the doctoral supervisor level may lead to insights which impact how individuals, programs, and departments approach gatekeeping policies. The overall goal of this dissertation is to develop an understanding of how doctoral-level supervisors experience developing a gatekeeper role. A better understanding of this phenomenon could be used to inform the education and training of doctoral-level supervisors, prepare doctoral-level students for gatekeeping roles as future faculty members, and implement improved supports as they navigate gatekeeping responsibilities as a doctoral-level student.
Purpose of the Study

This study sought to understand how doctoral-level supervisors experience developing a gatekeeping role through use of qualitative methods. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) emphasized qualitative research as “a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (p. 3). This research is a step toward making the gatekeeper role of the doctoral-level student more visible and understood. Of additional interest is the role professional identity constructs play in doctoral-level students’ experiences as supervisors. These constructs may illuminate non-academic dispositional qualities that are pertinent to the training of both doctoral-level supervisors and master’s-level counseling students. Additionally, this study may provide information that could inform ways to improve support for doctoral-level students as they take on the gatekeeper role. Implications for counselor educators, supervisors, and researchers were developed.

Research Questions

The primary research question of this phenomenological study is:

1. How do CES doctoral-level students describe their lived experience of adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within counselor education?

Additional sub-questions include:

A. How do CES doctoral-level students with gatekeeping experiences describe their experiences in adapting to gatekeeping roles and responsibilities?

B. When engaged in gatekeeping, what are the lived experiences of CES doctoral-level students related to personal, interpersonal, and environmental factors?

C. What factors do CES doctoral-level students describe as barriers and supports during their experience?
**Researcher Position within the Study**

The present study sought to examine a phenomenon with which I have personal experience and research experience. As a doctoral-level supervisor, I have had to adopt informal gatekeeping duties with supervisees. These experiences were both personally and professionally challenging and stand out as critical incidents during my doctoral education. During these experiences, I often struggled to provide the feedback that I believed the student required. I also struggled with my evaluative role, particularly with supervisees exhibiting deficiencies or supervisees who struggled receiving feedback on their knowledge or techniques. I felt uncomfortable providing feedback to faculty members on which areas the struggling student needed to work on, and what might help them advance their skills. Throughout these experiences, a parallel process was occurring between my evaluative role, and my role as a student. My performance as a student and supervisor was being assessed as I was evaluating my supervisees’ performances. Balancing these roles often felt precarious as I was concerned with how I was being evaluated as a supervisor, and how much support I would be given in my evaluations of supervisees. Finally, as a supervisee, I have had several experiences in which my performance was evaluated critically. Although I am grateful for the feedback I received from supervisors, and believe these experiences have benefited my professional development, I understand how challenging it can feel to be given critical feedback. These experiences have created significant countertransference when I have been called to step into gatekeeping roles.

I have developed several assumptions as a result of these experiences and my knowledge of the literature. I believe that doctoral-level students struggle to take on gatekeeping responsibilities and that a complex interaction of constructs plays a part in managing this role. These constructs are both internal and external to the student. Internal constructs such as
personality, prior experiences, clinical and personal attachment styles, and theoretical orientation are likely important. External constructs such as training, faculty member status, program policies, and supervisee factors are also likely impactful. Finally, I believe that the supervision alliance affects this phenomenon, and is likely influenced by all the preceding factors.

I understand that these are my personal assumptions and may not be shared by others. It is important that I attempt to withhold assumptions and reduce researcher bias while collecting and analyzing data so that I do not impose my ideas and misinterpret others’ experiences. The trustworthiness procedures which were utilized to address these assumptions and biases are further discussed in the Issues of Trustworthiness section included in Chapter 3. However, these procedures include a bracketing interview prior to the investigation, reflexivity memos, a pre-coding memo, the use of an external auditor, member checks, and frequent debriefing.

Assumptions

In this section, an overview of researcher assumptions is included. Several assumptions were made by the researcher throughout the study. First, the researcher assumed that the methodological steps included in the following chapters, and inclusion of the researcher reflexivity section, would help establish trustworthiness. Second, the researcher assumed that the experience of adopting the gatekeeping role is significant for doctoral-level students. Third, the researcher assumed that the selected sample was honest and thorough in their responses. Finally, the researcher assumed that developing an understanding of the participants’ experience would provide useful information for counselor educators, researchers, and supervisors.

Limitations

Present within the study are several limitations which are briefly outlined in this section. Subsequent chapters discuss these limitations in greater detail. The study sought to examine a
complicated, sensitive topic, experienced by an indeterminate number of individuals, agreeing to participate on a voluntary basis. The number of participants, and regional location might be a potential limitation. Due to the nature of the topic, participants might have had strong emotional reactions to discussing the topic, and other concerns which may have limited their willingness to thoroughly respond to the interview questions. Finally, as previously noted, views towards gatekeeping as well as the policies and procedures used within gatekeeping processes vary greatly.

**Definition of Terms**

Included in this section are definitions for common terms in order to eliminate confusion. For the purpose of this study, these terms are described as follows. Any additional terms used within the literature and the study are defined as they are introduced.

1. *Gatekeeping:* The American Counseling Association (ACA) *Code of Ethics* (2014) defines gatekeeping as “the initial and ongoing academic, skill, and dispositional assessment of students’ competency for professional practice, including remediation and termination as appropriate” (p. 20).

2. *Problems of professional competence:* The terminology which has replaced ‘impairment’ to refer to students who are unable to make satisfactory progress during their training (Rust et al., 2013). Problems include a wide array of academic and non-academic characteristics, dispositional traits, knowledge, and skills which prevent the competent professional functioning necessary for the counseling profession (Elman & Forrest, 2007).

3. *Gateslipping:* The failure of counselor educators to prevent students exhibiting problems of professional competence from progressing through checkpoints in their
education (Homrich et al., 2013). These checkpoints include but are not limited to the admissions stage, practicum, internship, graduation, and licensure. Many students can graduate from counselor education programs with an unresolved PPC. Estimates of percentage of students who gateslip varies from 2.5% to 17.9% annually according to past research (Brear et al., 2008; Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Gaubatz & Vera, 2006). More recent research has demonstrated that most counselor educators and clinical supervisors have provided supervision to a supervisee exhibiting a PPC (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016; Jorgensen et al., 2017). These finding suggest that many counseling students can graduate while still exhibiting a PPC.

4. **Terminal Licensure:** Terminal Licensure, or “fully licensed”, refers to the state issued professional license to practice as a licensed counselor. Requirements for licensure vary by state. However, participants who have completed the necessary academic training, examinations, and supervised clinical experience in order to obtain their state issued license are described as having terminal licensure, or fully licensed.

5. **Supervision:** The weekly individual, dyadic, or group meeting between supervisor and supervisee. Supervision requires that the supervisee present tape, discuss clients, elicit feedback, and address any ethical dilemmas with their supervisor. Supervisors are required to evaluate the competence and appropriateness of the supervisee for the counseling profession (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). The purpose of supervision is to facilitate the professional development and growth of the supervisee (Henriksen, et al., 2019). Supervision occurs at the academic level and is also a requirement for professional licensure. The present study examined supervision at the academic level.
Dissertation Overview

This study includes five chapters: Chapter 1 includes an introduction to the problem to be addressed by the study, the purpose of the study, key research questions, and an overview of assumptions as well as potential limitations. Chapter 2 provides a review of the available literature relating to gatekeeping. Chapter 3 includes an introduction to transcendental phenomenology, the methodology used for the study. Chapter 4 describes the data analysis process. Chapter 5 includes results, conclusions, recommendations, and limitations of the research findings.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The chapter begins with an introduction to literature related to gatekeeping and remediation within counselor education including issues associated with gatekeeping such as terminology and ethical and legal issues. Various gatekeeping models are reviewed, as well as concerns leading to gatekeeping and remediation, and interventions related to remediation. Next, literature related to counselor education, professional identity development, and how these relate to students at the practicum and internship stages of counselor education programs are discussed. From this review a rationale for exploring the experiences of doctoral-level students who have been placed in gatekeeping roles is proposed.

Terminology of Gatekeeping

In order to better understand the topic of gatekeeping and remediation, a clarification of key terms are offered. CACREP 2016 standards defined the process of gatekeeping and remediation as follows:

The ethical responsibility of counselor educators and supervisors to monitor and evaluate an individual’s knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions required by competent professional counselors and to remediate or prevent those that are lacking in professional competence from becoming counselors. (p. 45)

More specifically, gatekeeping can be defined as the ongoing screening process required to protect the community from trainees who demonstrate significant deficiencies. These processes are required by CACREP standards, ACA ethical standards, and the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). Although gatekeeping as a practice is required in the counselor education field, no specific gatekeeping model is mandated, nor are specific remedial interventions defined by the ACA, CACREP, or NBCC ethical standards, though many gatekeeping models exist (Foster & McAdams, 2009).
According to Swank and Smith-Adcock (2014), the gatekeeping process “begins during the admission process” and terminates at graduation (p. 59). During the admissions process, counselor educators must assess both academic aptitude and non-academic characteristics of applicants (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). The latter is defined by Swank and Smith-Adcock (2014) as “qualities that characterize an individual’s interpersonal interaction style” (p. 48). What constitutes these qualities and their relative importance differs greatly within the literature. McCaughan and Hill (2015), in examining gatekeeping at the admissions stage, “found little consensus or reference at all in regard to the definition of those qualities identified as preferred personal characteristics” (p. 38). Thus, counselor educators are left with the task of defining which personal characteristics are preferred within their programs. This highlights the need for programs and researchers to offer objective definitions within their gatekeeping policies.

**Terminology of Professional Competence**

The terminology used within the field of counselor education regarding the topic of gatekeeping and remediation has changed and expanded over time (Brown, 2013). Early literature included the term *impairment* in referring to concerns leading to gatekeeping and remediation steps (Lamb et al., 1987). Impairment is defined within the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) as a “significantly diminished capacity to perform professional functions” (p. 20). However, Li, Trusty, Lample and Lin (2008) stated that there is not a widely accepted definition for impairment. The use of the term impairment is also troublesome as it conflicts with the legal term impairment used in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment” (ADA, 2010, p. 30). Thus, the use of the term impairment might lead to potential unwanted legal considerations for counselor educators as it could be
interpreted as an act of discrimination (Falender et al., 2009). The term *unsuitability* has also been used in gatekeeping literature. Brear et al., (2008) defined unsuitability as “a catch-all for many problematic behaviors” (p. 94). However, more recent research has suggested that counselor educators utilize language which addresses behaviors related directly to performance and professionalism (Elman & Forrest, 2007; Falaender et al., 2009). As such, more recent research utilizes the terminology *problems of professional competency* (PPC) within the gatekeeping literature (Rust et al., 2013)

What constitutes professional competence seems to differ across the research, however, it appears to be linked to similar themes. For example, Lamb and Swerdlik (2003) identified student impairment, ethics, competence, and personal functioning as broad domains. Whereas Rice and Furr (2016), through a survey of 370 counselor educators, found that the most common types of problematic behaviors from students were linked to clinical skills, inter- and intra-personal skills, academic concerns, and unprofessional behaviors. The sample ranked unprofessional behavior, unethical behaviors, psychological concerns, personality disorders, and substance use disorders, as less impactful forms of problematic behavior. This sample rated behaviors which disrupted the classroom, or behaviors which negatively affected other students, as the most impactful behaviors (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2016). Henderson and Dufrene (2013) found that the top PPCs requiring remediation were, “(1) receptivity to feedback; (2) basic counseling skills; (3) boundaries with clients, supervisors, and/or colleagues; (4) openness to self-examination; and (5) advanced counseling skills” (p. 2).

The lack of consensus regarding what constitutes a PPC illustrates the number of inconsistencies within the literature addressing gatekeeping and remediation. Not only is terminology inconsistent, but what constitutes a PPC and procedures for gatekeeping also vary
Broadly, these concerns are often labeled as either academic or non-academic (Swank & Smith-Adock, 2014). Academic concerns relate to student academic performance, where non-academic problems refer to issues outside of classroom performance. The former is in many ways easier to assess, as it includes objective and measurable outcomes. The latter, however, poses much greater difficulty in assessment as dispositional, ethical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal concerns are much more difficult to operationalize and measure. However, Brear et al. (2008) stated that well defined and clearly articulated review criteria are “Especially critical in the areas of intrapersonal and interpersonal functioning, which have been shown to be key determinants of student unsuitability. However, such criteria for personal functioning too often remain ambiguous and ‘implicit rather than explicitly stated.’” (p. 100)

The Gatekeepers

The gatekeeping process contains multiple parties functioning in many roles within the counselor education system (Foster et al., 2014). Stakeholders include the counseling students and their peers as well as on-site supervisors, doctoral-level supervisors, and faculty members. The responsibilities as well as roles each of these parties has with students vary. Each of these parties have developed different professional and personal identities. These may affect their views of, experiences of, and approaches to gatekeeping and remediation. When, how, and why the gatekeeping process is initiated may potentially speak to the gatekeepers themselves. This relationship is not fully explored within the present literature and may be beneficial to examine in order to provide recommendations within the gatekeeping process.

Issues and Perceptions of Gatekeeping
Gatekeeping and remediation remain common topics within the field of counselor education and research (Demyan et al., 2018; Henderson & Dufrene, 2017; Hylton et al., 2017; Rapp et al., 2018; Schuermann et al., 2018). The various stakeholders within counselor education report conflicting views towards the gatekeeping process (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2019; Foster et al., 2014; Gaubatz & Vera, 2006). The ACA’s *Code of Ethics* (2014) defines gatekeeping as “the initial and ongoing academic, skill, and dispositional assessment of students’ competency for professional practice, including remediation and termination as appropriate” (p. 20). This requires that counselor educators with support from doctoral-level supervisors monitor evaluate, remediate, and then prevent students with problems of professional competency (PPCs) from progressing throughout the process of their education (CACREP, 2016).

Stakeholders in the gatekeeping process include state licensing boards, counselor education faculty, doctoral-level supervisors, licensure supervisors, master’s-level students, future clients, and the general public. Counselor educators have identified gatekeeping as commonly occurring and difficult to address for several reasons including the fear of litigation and negative evaluations. Gaubatz and Vera (2006) found that, through a survey of 45 counselor educators and 62 master’s-level counseling students, 98% of faculty were able to identify professionally deficient students and 90% of master’s students were identified deficient peers. Furthermore, these researchers found students reported 21% of their peers to be deficient; more than twice the proportion of students thought to be deficient by their faculty, at around 10% (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006). The discrepancy between the assessment of master’s students and faculty members of students with PPCs suggests that deficiencies may be indicated differently based on the assessor’s position to the student. Thus, doctoral-level students, whom are closer to peers than faculty, but not considered direct peers to master’s-level students, are uniquely
positioned within the supervisory role to identify PPCs that may be overlooked by faculty but have more context than their master’s-level peers. Gaubatz and Vera (2006) also found that the same students estimated 17.9% of their peers gateslipped each year. Homrich, DeLorenzi, Bloom and Gobee (2013) defined gateslipping as “when questionable trainees are permitted to move on to the next gatekeeping checkpoint” (p. 126). Brear et al. (2008) found that “faculty estimates of annual impairment rates vary from 4.6% to 10.4% of students” (p. 98-99). As doctoral-level students operate as supervisors in a space between being a direct peer and a faculty member in counselor education, it is imperative that further research be done to assess the role of these doctoral-level supervisors within gatekeeping.

Research has shown that the majority of master’s-level students reported they would be receptive to remediation, however, 22% also reported that they would pursue legal action upon dismissal from a counseling program (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006). This fear of litigation is often cited by faculty members as a primary factor in the reluctance to initiate gatekeeping procedures, including dismissal of students from counseling programs (Rice & Furr, 2016). Although doctoral-level supervisors are not included in formal retention and dismissal decisions, faculty members’ reluctance to gatekeep students with PPCs due to threat of legal action creates a learning environment where gateslipping is more likely to occur. In these instances, doctoral-level supervisors may continue to supervise deficient students, and this necessitates that they adopt an informal gatekeeper role during the supervision relationship. Additionally, doctoral-level supervisors’ documentation of PPCs can help to provide sufficient evidence and support of a pattern of behavior or deficiency. In the case that a student does pursue litigation after a formal gatekeeping procedure resulting in program dismissal, this documentation helps to ensure firm evidence to support the faculty’s decision to gatekeep.
The current research regarding doctoral-level students’ views and experiences of gatekeeping is limited (Rapp et al., 2018). Gazzola et al., (2013) found that doctoral-level supervisors rated “managing the gatekeeping role” as one of the primary challenges as a supervisor-in-training (p. 15). Increasing training and improving preparedness for the gatekeeping role within doctoral education has been suggested by researchers (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2019; Rapp et al., 2018).

**Professional Identity**

Previous research has shown years of experience, and academic rank can influence confidence in assuming gatekeeping roles (Brow-Rice, & Furr, 2018; Schuermann, 2018). Doctoral-level students often lack the clinical experience, as non-faculty lack seniority. According to Gibson et al. (2010), counselor professional identity can be defined as “the view of self as a professional plus competence as a professional, resulting in congruence between personal worldview and professional view” (p. 21). The development of this professional identity is an integrative process in which counselors incorporate not only academic knowledge, but also self-awareness, emotional awareness, autonomy, and membership within the counseling profession (Auxier et al., 2003). Through the process of professional identity development counselors should develop a “solid non-threatened belief in their own autonomy yet are equally non-threatened by their own occasional yet appropriate dependency” (Loganbill et al., 1983 p. 22). This process is completed through formal learning experiences as well as experimental and informal processes, many of which are included in professional identity development tasks such as practicum and internship courses.
When Gatekeeping Occurs

Gatekeeping occurs throughout the course of counselor education, as “problematic behavior can occur at any point within graduate training” (Brown, 2012, p. 171). However, certain stages of the educational process increase the likelihood of gatekeeping and remediation. Researchers have identified the admission, clinical practicum, and internship stages as points at which gatekeeping are most likely to occur (Olkin & Gaughen, 1991; Swank & Smith-Adcock, 2014). There are several reasons why these stages are likely to prompt gatekeeping and remediation. The admissions stage requires that many applicants be screened out based on eligibility and fit for the program, and clinical experiences, such as practicum and internship, illustrate issues of professional competence which are not always demonstrated clearly in other academic settings.

Admissions

Admissions is the first step in the gatekeeping process, during which counselor educators assess the appropriateness of the applicant’s academic and non-academic qualities for the counseling profession, “including self-awareness and emotional stability” (CACREP, 2016b, p. 38; Foster et al., 2014). Although the admissions process is the first step in gatekeeping, it does not appear to be a clear and consistent process across all CACREP programs (Hatchett et al., 2017; McCaughan & Hill, 2015; Swank & Smith-Adcock, 2014). From a sample of 79 CACREP-accredited programs, Swank and Smith-Adcock (2014) found programs generally require that applicants provide a variety of materials and complete interviews. However, there was a lack of consistency in the application materials required by programs, as well as in the screening procedures used during admissions. Forty-one (41%) percent of programs reported utilizing individual interviews, 35% reported using group interviews, and 24% reported using
group and individual (Swank & Smith-Adcock, 2014). While programs vary in the procedures they use during the admissions stage, the number of students considered deficient by their peers and supervisors is a consistent concern across programs. This suggests that regardless of application procedures, many students with early PPCs gateslip through this stage and enter the program.

**Clinical Courses**

There are gaps within the literature regarding the frequency of gatekeeping concerns arising during the practicum stage. Research suggests that practicum and internship are the stages in which gatekeeping regarding non-academic concerns are most likely to arise. Oklin and Gaughen (1991) found that 54% of problematic students were identified during their practicum or internship courses due to:

- Problems in clinical skills (77%), and pervasive interpersonal problems (70%), followed by problems in supervision (e.g., refuses to take suggestions, is closed to feedback, does not follow directions, and minimal self-examination--58%) or intrapersonal problems (e.g., substance use, emotional problems, personality disorder, rigidity, and immaturity--54%). Just under one-quarter of the programs identified problem students for ethical violations or professional misconduct, and 10% for physical problems (e.g., chronic illness and disabling conditions.

There issues where identified during courses which were completed toward the end of students’ coursework. Identifying students with PPCs at this stage of education is problematic. Behaviors associated with a PPC “may have a significant and potentially hazardous impact on clients” (Dean et al., 2018, p. 5). Students may also be negatively impacted by peers with a PPC, and often report that the presence of such a peer disrupts the educational process as well as their relationship with faculty (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013). Practicum and internship courses are the most likely to activate gatekeeping processes, as these experiential courses allow interpersonal elements of the student to be better demonstrated than in didactic classroom settings (Christensen & Ziomek-Diagle, 2010; Christian et al., 2018; Olkin & Gaughen, 1991). Researchers have
emphasized that PPCs related to non-academic characteristics are difficult to define and assess via formal procedures. Therefore, PPCs are often revealed through interpersonal interactions which take place in academic and professional settings during clinical practicum and internship (Duba et al., 2010). Such interactions often reveal non-academic characteristics such as receptivity to feedback, self-exploration, potential impairments, and professional identity development (Duba et al., 2010). Throughout these processes, doctoral-level supervisors are in a unique position to witness and assess students with PPCs because they are overseeing their supervisees’ caseloads, watching or listening to individual sessions, and discussing interactions with clients, site supervisors, faculty, and peers. Doctoral-level supervisors are also able to directly observe behaviors related to professionalism including preparedness, organization, and punctuality. Additionally, doctoral-level students often maintain dual relationships with master’s-level students and are often called upon to co-instruct courses which may create interactions which reveal PPCs.

Frame and Stevens-Smith (1995) proposed that several personality characteristics necessary for the counseling profession include openness, willingness to use and accept feedback, self-awareness, ability to handle conflict, ability to accept personal responsibility, and ability to express feelings effectively and appropriately. Interactions which occur during clinical experience can demonstrate the presence or deficit of these qualities. For example, Christensen and Ziomek-Diagle (2010) conducted interviews with eight counselor educators and found that participants highlighted the importance of non-academic concerns, which emerged during interactions with professors and supervisors at the practicum and internship phases. The findings from this sample concluded that the personality characteristics that Frame and Stevens-Smith
(1995) identified were only observable from interpersonal interactions during these stages of education.

The literature does not identify specific points during practicum and internship where PPCs are more likely to be identified. However, researchers have found that these issues of professional competence are commonly identified and documented by doctoral-level supervisors, clinical supervisors, and faculty (Craford & Gilroy, 2013). Christian et al. (2018) found that of 28 CACREP-accredited programs surveyed, 60% had a master’s-level student removed from their practicum or internship site due to a PPC. The authors also found that 78.6% of faculty reported that documentation provided by fieldwork supervisors led to and supported decisions to remediate problematic students. Identifying students with a PPC at this phase in their education can present several issues. First, counselor educators have an ethical responsibility to ensure “competency for professional practice” according to the ACA (2016, p. 20). Students at this stage of their education have had direct client contact, and the quality services rendered could be greatly impacted by PPCs (Dugger & Francis, 2014; Hancock, 2014; Henderson & Dufrene, 2011; Jorgensen et al., 2017; Parker et al., 2014). Second, responding to students with PPCs at a later stage of their education creates several difficulties for counselor educators. Students at this stage have often been allowed to progress through many courses, creating potential program conflict amongst faculty members, site supervisors, doctoral-level supervisors, and their classmates (Brear & Dorrian, 2010; DeDiego & Burgin, 2016; Forrest et al., 2013; Jacobs et al., 2011; McCutcheon, 2008; Shen-Miller et al., 2011). Finally, students with PPCs may negatively impact their peers’ learning environments and may undermine confidence in not only the counseling program, but the profession (Foster et al., 2014; Gaubatz & Vera, 2006).
At which stage gatekeeping may occur varies based upon a program’s policies, procedures, and student specific PPCs. Furthermore, gatekeeping models which inform a CES program’s procedures vary in the stages of education they propose. However, gatekeeping models typically view the process as ongoing, in which faculty and doctoral-level supervisors monitor, evaluate, remediate, and, if necessary, prevent students with PPCs from progressing to the next stage of their education.

**Gatekeeping Models**

Presently, there are several different models of gatekeeping available throughout the literature (Baldo et al., 1997; Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995; Kerl et al., 2011; Wilkerson, 2006; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). While these models differ in many respects, these models address gatekeeping as a multi-step process which begins with the establishment of clear policies, expectations, and means of evaluation by faculty. These policies and expectations should be made available to all students at several points during their education (CACREP, 2016; Kerl et al., 2011).

Frame and Stevens-Smith (1995) published one of the earliest and most influential gatekeeping models. The model is foundational, and steps within subsequent gatekeeping models do not differ substantially. This model is utilized by the Counseling Psychology and Counselor Education Division of the University of Colorado at Denver. Prior to implementing their gatekeeping process, the faculty created formal policies, procedures, and evaluative means to assess students based upon nine characteristics which were viewed as prerequisites to the counseling field. Frame and Stevens-Smith (1995) stated that these include “being open, flexible, positive, cooperative, willing to use and accept feedback, aware of impact on others, able to deal with conflict, able to accept personal responsibility, and able to express feeling effectively and
appropriately” (para. 21). These nine characteristics were incorporated into a Personal Characteristics Evaluation Form (PCEF) with which faculty evaluated students at midterm and at the end of the semester. Students with deficient scores would address them with a three-step procedure as outlined by the student handbook:

1. The student is presented in writing with a copy of the PCEF and the professor's comments. A copy of the form is also given to the full faculty and discussed in the next student review meeting. After the faculty discussion, the student and the professor will meet to discuss the evaluation form and any recommended remediation deemed appropriate.

2. If a student receives more than one PCEF during any one semester OR receives a form from more than one professor over any two-semester time frame, the student will be required to meet with his or her faculty advisor to discuss remediation or possible reconsideration of his or her continuation in the program. A copy of the evaluation scale and any action taken will be given to the student and placed in his or her file.

3. If a student receives three or more PCEFs in one semester, the student will be required to meet with his or her advisor and two other faculty members to discuss reconsideration of continuation in the counseling program. If the committee determines that the student's personal or professional behavior is inappropriate to the counseling field, and that such behaviors would be a detriment in working with others, the student will be denied continuance in the program. (Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995, p. 15)
Stages within Gatekeeping Models

Gatekeeping models are commonly multi-step processes (Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995; Wilkerson, 2006; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). The involvement of doctoral-level students and supervisors during each of these stages is not well documented within the research. However, the steps with these models are similar. Ziomek-Daigle and Christensen (2010) proposed one of the most utilized gatekeeping models. Within this model, gatekeeping occurs at four-stages: (1) pre-admission, (2) post-admission, (3) remediation, and (4) post-remediation outcome. Students are continually assessed throughout their education, beginning at admission decisions.

Wilkerson (2006) proposed a gatekeeping model which incorporates five steps based upon a therapeutic model. This includes: 1) informed consent during the pre-admissions stage 2) intake and assessment during the admissions stage 3) evaluation throughout the student’s course work 4) treatment planning during course work including remediation 5) and termination decisions regarding graduation or dismissal.

Within both models, gatekeeping is an ongoing process designed to prevent students from continuing to the next stage of their education without addressing the PPC. Together these models can be outlined as follows:

Pre-admissions Screening

Gatekeeping processes begin at the pre-admissions stage. During this stage potential students are evaluated for their academic aptitude, and interpersonal abilities (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen 2010). Prior to admissions students should be provided with and agree to, a program’s policies and procedures. This includes information regarding potential risks and benefits of entering the program. During this stage, program evaluation criteria and rationale for
retention decisions should be provided. Additionally, students should be informed how retention decisions are made, and written agreement from students should be collected (Wilkerson, 2006). The involvement of doctoral-level students at this stage is not documented within the body of literature, and doctoral-level students should not be formally involved in decisions of admissions. However, it is likely that doctoral-level students may be present for interviews and may provide feedback regarding applicants and recently admitted students.

**Post-admission**

During this stage, students’ academic and non-academic aptitudes are evaluated and monitored through academic courses, clinical coursework, and supervision (Wilkerson, 2006; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). Students’ interactions with clients, peers, and supervisors are evaluated and utilized for gatekeeping decisions. Ziomek-Daigle and Christensen (2010) emphasize the importance of continuous evaluation and monitoring of students during this stage. Students at the post-admissions stage of gatekeeping are frequently receiving doctoral supervision during practicum and internships courses or are taking courses being co-instructed by doctoral-level students. Informal gatekeeping processes involving doctoral-level students are likely to occur at this stage as doctoral-level students are included in informal gatekeeping processes, including the evaluation of students, monitoring, and providing feedback.

**Remediation**

Both Wilkerson (2006) and Ziomek-Diagle & Christensen (2010) position the remediation stage as second to last stage of gatekeeping within their models. Remediation can be defined as the process counselor educators utilize in “the handling of competence problems” (Kaslow et al., 2006, p. 482) to attempt to resolve such problems prior to graduation. Although they should not be included in informal remediation processes, doctoral-level students often
provide evaluative information which may lead to decisions of remediation. Additionally, doctoral-level students are frequently part remediation processes as they often monitor and evaluate remediation goals within supervision. Doctoral-level student can be called upon to increase the frequent of supervision. Doctoral-level supervisors are likely to provide feedback regarding areas of progress or failure to progress to their supervisee’s during remediation. Interventions utilized for the purposes of remediation are further discussed in following sections.

*Post-Remediation*

During this stage outcomes related to the success, failure, or neutral response to remediation are evaluated, and monitored at this point within these gatekeeping models (Wilerson, 2006; Ziomek-Diagle & Christensen 2010). Although research does not document how doctoral-level supervisors are utilized during this stage, they are likely involved in processes during this stage as they evaluate, monitor, and likely discuss the remediation process during co-instruction and supervision with students. Although not involved in formal retention and dismissal decisions doctoral-level supervisors provide information which could be used to make formal gatekeeping decisions, including preventing students from progressing in their education.

**Interventions Used for Gatekeeping and Remediation**

The most common types of interventions used as part of the remediation process include: (a) increased supervision, (b) changing emphasis of supervision, (c) attending personal counseling, (d) course repetition, (e) additional assignments, (f) reduced clinical caseload, and (g) taking a leave of absence (Forrest et al., 1999; Henderson & Dufrene, 2017; Li et al., 2008; Olkin & Gaughen, 1991; Oliver et al., 2004; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004). The use of these interventions varies across programs, and there is a lack of consistency and clarity regarding which interventions should be used for remediation across CACREP programs. As such,
counselor educators and doctoral-level supervisors are left with the task of selecting which interventions should be used, whether in individual cases or program wide. For example, increased supervision is one of the most prescribed remediation interventions. It is often the first recommended intervention for non-academic issues (Henderson, 2010; Lamb et al., 1991).

**Efficacy of Interventions**

Research has not shown the efficacy of increased supervision, course repetition, additional assignments, psychotherapy, reducing caseload, or taking a leave of absence (Kaslow et al., 2007). Which interventions are best suited to address specific student concerns was not found within the literature through an extensive search through Academic Search Complete & ProQuest Central databases utilizing the following search terms, gatekeeping, interventions, efficacy, and remediation. Researcher have identified this as a gap within the literature (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Henderson, 2009; Teixeira, 2017; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004). Furthermore, which interventions are best paired to certain student preferences and personalities has also not been fully explored. How the remediation process is linked to and influenced by stakeholder qualities such as professional identity, and professional role was not found within the review of the literature. As non-academic professional competency concerns are the most identified for gatekeeping concerns, and these concerns are largely dispositional in nature, remediation outcomes are likely to be influenced by the goodness of fit between the intervention and the student’s personality factors.

**Professional Identity**

Previous research has shown years of experience, and academic rank can influence confidence in assuming gatekeeping roles (Brown-Rice, & Furr, 2018; Schuermann, 2018). Doctoral-level student often lack the clinical experience, as non-faculty lack seniority. According
to Gibson et al. (2010), counselor professional identity can be defined as “the view of self as a professional plus competence as a professional, resulting in congruence between personal worldview and professional view” (p. 21). The development of this professional identity is an integrative process in which counselors incorporate not only academic knowledge, but also self-awareness, emotional awareness, autonomy, and membership within the counseling profession (Auxier et al., 2003). Through the process of professional identity development counselors should develop a “solid non-threatened belief in their own autonomy yet are equally non-threatened by their own occasional yet appropriate dependency” (Loganbill et al., 1983 p. 22). This process is completed through formal learning experiences as well as experimental and informal processes, many of which are included in professional identity development tasks such as practicum and internship courses. Gibson et al. (2010) found that counseling students rated the latter as being more transformative than the former.

**Conclusion**

A review of the literature related to gatekeeping revealed little regarding how gatekeeping processes are influenced and interact with personal factors such as professional identity. Research shows non-academic concerns related to personality traits as one of the frequent and challenging for counselor educators to address. While formal gatekeeping procedures such as professional competency evaluations serve a vital role within the gatekeeping process, informal processes which arise during practicum and internship course, such as case presentations, site and doctoral supervision, and various interactions with peers, faculty, and doctoral-level students, illuminate potentially concerning personal competency issues. PPCs may be related to personality traits, and counselor professional identity. Furthermore, these factors
may influence how students and faculty approach gatekeeping, their perception of, and experience of the gatekeeping process.
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of doctoral-level students in developing the gatekeeper role within counselor education. Increasing the knowledge surrounding this phenomenon has the potential to improve gatekeeping processes and benefit counseling students as they learn to develop the gatekeeper role.

The research methodology is described within this chapter. A rationale for the use of phenomenology to explore the research question is provided. The conceptual framework which guided the collection and analysis of the data was described. Additionally, this chapter outlined the selection of participants, their recruitment, and eligibility requirements. The chapter concludes with a description of the research design, procedures to establish trustworthiness and a summary.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

Presently, there are gaps within the research literature regarding how doctoral-level supervisors adapt to their role as gatekeepers. The study sought to explore the lived experiences of participants in adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities. Developing a clearer understanding of these experiences could help inform the field of CES and improve gatekeeping processes. Qualitative research is well suited for exploring issues and concerns which do not lend themselves to quantitative examination (Hunt, 2011). The dearth of research related to this topic necessitates an exploratory research approach which may yield data capable of increasing the understanding of the development of the gatekeeper role and inform future research.

Rationale for Phenomenology

Phenomenology is one of the most frequently utilized qualitative research designs (Flynn et al., 2019; Hays et al., 2015, Woo & Heo, 2013). The goal of phenomenological research
methodology is to explore the lived experiences of participants with a phenomenon of interest in order to describe the meaning or essence of their experience from their perspective (Hays & Wood, 2011; Wertz, 2005). Developing an understanding of the shared experience of doctoral-level students in taking on gatekeeping roles could help inform policies, practices, and future research. Several methodological approaches can be used for conducting phenomenological research including hermeneutic phenomenology, existential phenomenology, and transcendental phenomenology. The latter is widely utilized as Moustakas (1994) created systematic steps of data analysis and development of descriptors which seek to reduce researcher interpretations and instead focus on description (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study utilized a transcendental phenomenological approach.

Conceptual Framework

The following section includes a description of the conceptual framework which informed the research procedures and analysis of findings. Jabareen (2009) stated that a conceptual framework consists of several concepts which “possess ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions” (p. 50) and thus directs the way phenomena is understood.

Interpretive Paradigm

The study utilized a social constructivism research paradigm. While there are several available qualitative research paradigms, phenomenological research designs commonly utilize a constructivist paradigm (Flynn et al., 2019; Hays & Woods, 2011). The present study sought to understand the participant’s subjective experience with the phenomena of taking on the gatekeeping role and the meaning they create as a result. A constructivist paradigm assumes an epistemological stance that knowledge is constructed by the individual. Wilkinson and Hanna (2016) explain this as “[h]umans are […] meaning makers rather than objective identifiers” (p.
5). Social constructivism should be distinguished from other constructivist forms as the former emphasizes the collective nature of knowledge construction, particularly the influence of culture (Powell & Kalina, 2009).

The study was informed by the Five Factor Model of Personality (FFM). This trait based construct of personality describes five personality traits: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Zillig et al., 2002). This model of personality informed the creation of questions, and was utilized during the data analysis. Participant’s statements regarding disposition which appeared to align with a readily identifiable FFM trait were linked to FFM traits.

**Research Questions**

This study sought to explore the lived experiences of CES doctoral-level students who have taken on gatekeeping roles and responsibilities through the following research question:

1. How do doctoral-level students describe their lived experience of adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within counselor education?

Additional sub-questions included:

A. How do CES doctoral-level students with gatekeeping experiences describe their experiences in adapting to gatekeeping roles and responsibilities?

B. What are the lived experiences of CES doctoral-level student interactions of personal, interpersonal, and environmental factors when taking on gatekeeping roles?

C. What factors do CES doctoral-level students describe as barriers and supports during their gatekeeping experience?
Participants

The following section includes information regarding the selection of participants including sampling procedures, recruitment, eligibility criteria, and site selection.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Qualitative research utilizes purposeful sampling procedures in order to select participants who have experience with the phenomenon (Hunt, 2011; Koch et al., 2014). The goal of a purposeful sample is to recruit participants who are can provide thorough descriptions of the phenomenon. Patton (2014) has suggested 15 specific purposeful sampling procedures, including chain and criterion sampling strategies. The present study utilized a combination of criterion and chain sampling strategy, also referred to as snowball sampling.

Criterion sampling selects participants who meet inclusion criteria (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2014). For the purposes of phenomenological research criterion sampling is beneficial because it provides the researcher with a homogenous group from which common themes can emerge. Chain sampling is “particularly useful for capitalizing on expert wisdom” (Suri, 2011, p. 6) and focuses on participants who share similar characteristics and experiences (Palinkas et al., 2015). Chain sampling is widely utilized within qualitative research and is an accumulative process of referrals for participation by participants (Morrow, 2005).

Several sample sizes for phenomenological research have been suggested. Polkinghorne (1989) suggested five to 25 individuals, Morse (1995) suggested at least six, while Mason (2010) found a range of seven to 20 participants for 25 published phenomenological articles utilized. These studies did not make recommendations for sample size based off phenomenological approach or described how the type of phenomenological research effected sample size.
The researcher sought to include approximately ten participants for the study. Eight participants from three southern CACREP accredited CES programs agreed to participate. One participant dropped out of the study prior to data collection. Although this was less than the intended number, it was well within ranges suggested by research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mason, 2010). The researcher utilized chain sampling which allowed the sample size to increase during the interview process in order to ensure saturation of data.

**Recruitment Strategies**

After receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, a variety of recruitment strategies were utilized in order to solicit participants within the same CES program as the researcher, as well as participants at other CES programs. The recruitment strategies included committee members identifying potential subjects. The researcher then sent potential subjects a recruitment email, which is found in Appendix B. Upon agreeing to participate the participants were sent an email link to the Qualtrics forms, which included informed consent, demographics, and a critical incident writing prompt. After completing these forms, interviews were scheduled via email, and follow up questions were emailed after the transcription of interviews was completed.

**Eligibility**

The study included full-time doctoral-level students enrolled in CACREP-accredited CES programs who completed supervision training and subsequently had supervision experiences which required gatekeeping roles and responsibilities. This included gatekeeping procedures ranging from conversations during supervision up to remediation.
Site Selection

Data was collected at three Research 1 universities in the southeastern United States. In order to provide a richer understanding of the phenomenon, the inclusion of participants at sites outside the researcher’s own program was important as it was believed that this could increase transferability.

Research Design

The following section includes rationale for the data collection methods and describes how data was collected. The data analysis procedures, and the procedures which were utilized to ensure the rigor of the investigation are included.

Data Collection

Phenomenological research utilizes several data collection methods, but primarily relies on interviews supplemented with observations, and other documents (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hays & Wood, 2011; Koch et al., 2014). The use of multiple sources increases credibility of the research findings (Carter et al., 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This practice is referred to as triangulation. Patton (1999) outlined four specific kinds of triangulation which he recommended to increase the validity of qualitative research designs: (1) method triangulation refers to multiple means of gathering data; (2) triangulation of sources, which is the comparison of multiple points of data gathered by the same means; (3) analysts triangulation refers to the use of multiple analysts to examine the data; and finally, (4) theory triangulation, the use of multiple theories to interpret data.

This examination utilized Patton’s data triangulation recommendations to the degree possible. Data collected included demographic information, multiple in-depth interviews, and critical incident reporting. Triangulation of sources was achieved by conducting and transcribing
audio interviews and gathering written responses. Participants provided a written response to the survey, critical incident writing prompt, and section interview questions in order to achieve triangulation of sources. Theory triangulation was achieved through a social constructivist paradigm, and five factor model of personality in order to interpret the data.

**Informed Consent**

Potential participants were identified by committee members, the researcher, and other participants. Potential participants were emailed a recruitment letter, which included a link to the study. Informed consent was provided via Qualtrics and potential risk and rewards were outlined in the document. Participants were told their participation was completely voluntary and they could discontinue at any time without consequences or repercussions. One participant decided to drop out of the study prior to completing the survey. Their data was not included. Prior to recording the researcher reviewed the consent form verbally with each participant during the first interview.

**Data Protection**

In order to ensure confidentiality of the participants, all identifying information was removed from the gathered data, pseudonyms were used, and data was stored in password protected encrypted files.

**Demographic Information**

Participants completed a brief survey in which they reported their age, gender, race, and present year in CES program, duration of supervision experience, number of supervisees, number of gatekeeping experiences, supervision model, and counseling theory. Data was collected through Qualtrics survey software. This survey is included in Appendix D.
Interviews

Interviews are typically the primary source of data for qualitative research (Bevan, 2014; Englander, 2012; Flynn et al., 2019; Polkinghorne, 2005). The present study utilized semi-structured interviews as the main source of data. Qualitative interviewing presents several challenges for researchers to address through the structure of the interview protocol, selection of questions, and conducting of interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Chenail, 2011). Developing interview questions which are guided by research literature and a clear interview protocol reduces researcher bias and increases the credibility of the research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005; Chenail, 2011; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). The interview protocol for this study was informed by the literature, and was developed to reduce researcher bias, facilitate descriptive response by the participants, as well as address potential risks for the participants.

The development of interview questions for both interviews followed four steps. First, the researcher reviewed the pertinent literature and developed the questions for Interview 1 to align with the research questions. Second, follow-up questions for Interview 2 were designed to require thorough responses that would complement the Interview 1 questions. Third, feedback regarding both Interview 1 and 2 was provided by the chair and other committee members, and the feedback was integrated. Finally, the protocol was piloted with a non-participant familiar with the phenomenon. The order of items was altered to improve the flow of the interview. Interview 1 was to be conducted after the participant had completed informed consent, demographic forms, and a critical incident writing prompt. The first semi-structured individual interviews lasted 21 to 41 minutes. Interview 1 protocol is included as Table 1 in Appendix A. Interview 2 protocol is in Appendix G. Interview 2 was conducted after the participant completed and provided a critical incident writing prompt. The questions for Interview 2 were
guided by emergent themes from Interview 1 and the critical incident writing prompt. Participants were emailed Interview 2 questions, and provided written responses via email. It was assumed that due to the location of participants and the research methodology that the use of a focus group was unnecessary. It appeared that saturation had been reached in the data, as themes present in the critical incident writing prompt, Interview 1, and Interview 2 did not vary, and no additional themes emerged during Interview 2.

**Critical incident reporting**

The use of multiple data sources is commonly utilized in qualitative research and recommended for the purpose of triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Morrow, 2005; Polkinghorne, 2005). The present study included a critical incident writing prompt in which participants were asked in writing to describe a critical incident involving their gatekeeping experience. The CIT prompt is included in Appendix E. The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) has been frequently utilized and has an extensive history of use within qualitative research (Butterfield & Borgen, 2005). The CIT method proposed by Flanagan (1954) was developed in an industrial and organizational psychology context and focuses on examining work-related task performance (Butterfield & Borgen, 2005). Subsequent researchers have utilized CIT to explore individuals’ salient experiences of success and failure amongst a wide range or professions (Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; Collins & Pieterse, 2007; Collins et al., 2014; Gremler, 2004; Howard et al., 2006). This study utilized the procedural recommendations offered by Butterfield et al. (2009) for retroactive self-reported critical incident data.

**Data Analysis**

The study adhered to transcendental phenomenological data analysis procedures recommended by Moustakas (1994). Through a multi-step process, the data analysis procedures
attempt to create a synthesis of textural and structural descriptions from the data, in order to better understand the phenomenon. This section presents the specific steps which were utilized in order to analyze data collected from the participants including interview transcripts, critical incident journals, demographic forms, program specific Professional Characteristic Review Standards (PCR), and information gained from member checks. Additionally, data gathered from the researcher including research memos, field notes, and external auditor feedback was used.

Bracketing and Epoche

Prior to beginning this investigation and throughout its course there was an attempt to set aside researcher bias to the highest degree possible through bracketing. Moustakas (1994) stated that bracketing allows the researcher to “refrain from judgement, to abstain or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things” (p. 33), a state he referred to as epoche. Pure objectivity cannot be achieved within qualitative methodology. However, epoche allows the researcher to examine the phenomenon of interest with a degree of objectivity. There are various definitions of bracketing as well as perspectives on when and how bracketing should be conducted (Drew, 2004; Gearing, 2004; Tufford & Newman, 2012). The lack of clear definitions or methodological guidelines is both a challenge and asset to researchers (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Creswell and Poth (2018) defined bracketing as a process in which “investigators set aside their experiences as much as possible” (p. 78).

This study utilized bracketing methods suggested by Tufford and Newman (2012). A reflexivity journal was kept throughout the research process. Written memos described the researcher’s assumptions regarding the investigation, its participants, and subjective experiences throughout the investigation. An example of these memos is included in Appendix H. Memos were completed prior to interviews, after interviews, prior to coding and throughout the data.
coding process. Finally, the use of an external auditor was also utilized to address researcher bias during the investigation. The researcher met with and received feedback from the auditor prior to interviews, prior to coding, and during coding steps. This feedback included ways to conduct interviews which maintained fidelity to the interview protocol while allowing for follow up questions, and in manner which facilitated the establishment of rapport. The auditor provided suggestions regarding coding processes, and the labeling of themes. The feedback and suggestions helped clarify steps and processes for the researcher to follow. A bracketing interview also took place before data collection, to inventory potential biases and assumptions.

**Phenomenological Reduction**

First developed by Husserl, phenomenological reduction sought to reduce the experience of a phenomenon to a *textural description*, which is the “what” of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). *Horizontalization* is the first step within the data analysis process. At this initial stage, every statement has equal value. During the next stage, redundant and non-relevant statements were removed the statements left were *statements of meaning*, which are then clustered into themes, and from these themes a coherent *textural description* is created. After multiple reviews for accuracy, transcripts were analyzed and redundant and non-relevant statements regarding the participant’s experience of gatekeeping were removed. After the removal of superfluous statements, emergent themes were identified, and participant quotes were then clustered in order to create individual textural descriptions. These were then combined to create a composite textural description.

During the second stage of data analysis, *imaginative variation* was be applied to analyze the textural description in order to create a structural description, which is the “how” of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). During this process, the researcher used various forms of
reference to seek different perspectives, ways of interpreting the data, and conclusions. A list of structural themes was then developed and these structural themes were clustered to create individual structural descriptions. Then a composite structural description was developed through integrating the individual structural descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). Finally, the third step was completed by creating a synthesis of the textural and structural descriptions in order to achieve what Moustakas (1994) described as a “unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole,” that is, the integration of “what” and “how” meanings and the essence of the gatekeeping phenomenon (p. 100).

**Issues of Trustworthiness**

Several researchers have offered differing perspectives on the validation of qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study utilized the model by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which outlines four widely used components to ensure rigor (trustworthiness) in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In order to meet these components, they offered several validation procedures for qualitative research which include: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, reflexivity, thick description, member checking, external auditing, complexity of analysis, and referential adequacy. Creswell (2018) recommended that “researchers engage in at least two of the validation strategies” to ensure rigor. The present study utilized these procedures to the highest degree possible (p. 259).

The procedures used to establish trustworthiness was based on well-established research strategies recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Creswell and Poth (2018), and Shenton (2004). Several of these procedures overlap in the criteria that they address and researchers have included many of these procedures as meeting different sets of criteria (Flynn et
al., 2018; Hays et al., 2014; Krefting, 1991; Morrow, 2005). The following sections provide a brief explanation of the trustworthiness criteria which were met and includes the strategies which were used.

**Credibility**

In qualitative research, the concept of credibility, analogous with internal validity in quantitative research, refers to the degree to which the researcher is accurately describing the participants’ experiences (Krefting, 1991; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). According to Hays, Wood, and Kirk-Jenkins (2014), credibility refers to “the overall believability of a study or the degree to which research outcomes seem accurate based on the research process” (p. 174). The procedures which were utilized to address the criteria of credibility were based upon well-established research strategies. The following sections outline the steps which were used in order to establish credibility.

**Triangulation.** Triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources of data, collection methods, investigators, and theories to analyze data (Carter et al., 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999), stated that the use of these four kinds of triangulation is necessary as each form of data collection methods, sources, data analysis, and theoretical perspectives might reveal different aspects of the subject under examination. The present study attempts to achieve the four kinds of triangulation suggested by Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999). In order to establish credibility through method triangulation, the researcher used two individual interviews, critical incident memos, and demographic forms. Multiple interviews achieved triangulation of sources. As the researcher was the sole investigator, debriefing and an external auditor were used for analyst triangulation. Finally, the researcher applied multiple theories to analyze data to provide theory/perspective triangulation.
**Member checks.** Member checking is one of the most applied techniques to establish credibility in qualitative research (Flynn et al., 2018; Hays et al., 2014; Woo & Heo, 2013). This procedure involves giving participants the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the accuracy of transcripts, emergent themes, and interpretations and conclusions from their data (Carlson, 2010; Creswell & Poth, 2018, Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There is great variation around when and how researchers have conducted member checks (Birt et al., 2016; Harvey, 2015; Koelsch, 2013; Thomas, 2017). For the purposes of this study, participants were provided with digital copies of their responses, as well as themes identified from the data, after all the data was collected and identifying information was removed. Participants were asked to review, provide feedback, and make changes. Several participants asked to change their responses or delete information they felt uncomfortable including.

**Debriefing.** Debriefing is a validation process in which the researcher meets with an external party in order to explore “aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 308). Throughout the course of this examination, debriefing sessions with committee members was utilized. Debriefing was utilized in order to gain feedback regarding the conduction of interviews, and develop ways to limit bias from impacting the interview process. The researcher elicited feedback regarding coding procedures, and during the development of follow up questions to ensure rigor, and credibility of the findings.

**External auditor.** In addition to debriefing sessions with committee members, an external auditor with prior experience with both the phenomenon and phenomenological research was consulted periodically throughout the course of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that debriefing by an external disinterested party provides a more “honest” evaluation of the
research. The external auditor was utilized to assess emergent themes developed by the researcher in order to ensure they are consistent with the participants’ experiences and limit the imposition of researcher bias.

**Negative case analysis.** This validation procedure involves continuous modification of the research questions to account for discrepant cases within the data set that do not conform to emergent themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). The present study used this to account for outliers and includes discrepant cases in the final report. Statements which appeared unique to one or two individuals were considered outliers. Negative case analysis informed interview two questions regarding the influence and intersection of identity. This was identified as a primary theme from responses from interview two.

**Reflexivity.** Reflexivity is the most used credibility validation procedure in qualitative research (Hays et al., 2015; Flynn et al., 2018; Woo & Heo, 2013). Reflexivity procedures attempt to reduce the effect of researcher bias by outlining relevant traits and experiences of the researcher regarding the subject of the examination (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Reflexivity is achieved through an active and explicit process of self-appraisal, and accounting of researcher effects on the development of the research questions, research design, and conduct of the study, data analysis and subjects themselves (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Shenton, 2004).

In order to help ensure credibility, this study followed suggestions offered by Berger (2015), Etherington (2004), and Levitt et al. (2017). A reflexivity memo was completed prior to the selection of participants. Additionally, a reflexive research memo was completed prior to and after interviews and as transcription and coding is completed. Debriefing was conducted with the chair, and other committee members prior to coding, during coding, and throughout the data
analysis. An external auditor was consulted throughout the course of the study. Finally, repeated reviews of transcripts and emergent themes was be conducted after a significant time lapse.

**Transferability**

Transferability is like the positivist concept of external validity, referring to the degree to which the research results and conclusions are applicable to other contexts both internal and external (Krefting, 1991; Maxwell, 2013; Shenton, 2004). The procedures which were utilized to meet this component are addressed in the sections below. Previously discussed procedures such as purposeful sampling, the semi-structured interview protocol, transparency in data analysis, and external auditing also served a function in meeting this component.

**Prolonged engagement and persistent observation.** This validation procedure utilizes multiple observations over a sufficient period in order to “rule out spurious associations and premature theories” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126). The goal of this procedure is to eliminate misinformation and researcher bias, and to gain a deeper understanding of the participants and their setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The present study utilized two semi-structured interviews; participant responses in the first interview guided the creation of questions for the second interview. In addition, participants completed member checks. Participants were provided a copy of transcripts with identified themes; they were given an opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions. Requested changes were completed. This provided participants opportunities to assess the accuracy of the data and findings.

**Thick description.** Detailed descriptions of both the participants’ experiences and the setting helps readers to determine the level of transferability of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Morrow, 2005). Thorough details regarding the participant’s experience with the phenomenon were recorded. Additionally, this study adhered to recommendations by Creswell
and Poth (2018) regarding prompt review of data, with the intention of expanding upon details as needed to provide thick description.

**Dependability**

The component of dependability is analogous with reliability to which the research process can be duplicated (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Morrow, 2005; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). This is achieved through clear documentation of research procedures and execution of consistent research procedures. The documentation of data analysis procedures, use of an external auditor, triangulation, and persistent observation helped meet this component of trustworthiness. Additional procedures which were used to ensure dependability are discussed in the following section.

**Audit trail.** Modeled after a fiscal audit, an audit trail provides clear documentation of the researcher’s research decisions, and the procedures they used in gathering and analyzing their data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Onuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Shenton, 2004). In order to meet this component, field notes and researcher memos were kept for an audit trail, along with all communication from the external auditor. Additionally, a data management plan was created and included as the study progressed. The data management plan clearly documented when and how each step of data collection occurred.

**Referential adequacy.** In addition to documents being stored digitally in encrypted files, in order to provide an audit trail, other documents, and demographic data, are archived. These materials could be utilized for future examination and allow outside researchers to assess the adequacy of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Confirmability

According to Guba and Lincoln (1982), confirmability is analogous with the quantitative research term objectivity. The degree to which findings of this study represent the participant’s actual experiences of the gatekeeping phenomenon, and the degree to which the results of the study could be corroborated by external researchers (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Many of the procedures previously discussed contribute to the component of confirmability. Several of the steps outlined previously have been specifically suggested to be included in order to achieve confirmability, including field notes, reflexive memos, member checks, triangulation and the audit trail (Anney, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1982, Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Shenton, 2004).

Conclusion

This chapter presented the research methodology which were utilized for the current study and rationale for its use. A rationale for the choice of phenomenology as a research method to answer the research questions was presented. The conceptual framework which guided the data collection and its analysis was included as well as information regarding sample sizing, and procedures to ensure rigor. The study sought to include approximately ten subjects, ultimately nine agreed to participate and eight completed the study. Participants were current doctoral-level CES supervisors enrolled at three southern CACREP accredited programs. The participants completed a demographic survey, a critical incident writing prompt, and two interviews. Several steps to ensure trustworthiness were followed at every stage in order to ensure the quality of the data.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of doctoral-level students in adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES). This researcher believes that developing a better understanding of this phenomenon could be used to help inform the education and training of doctoral-level supervisors, prepare doctoral-level students for gatekeeping roles as future faculty members, and improve supports as they navigate gatekeeping responsibilities as a doctoral-level student.

Included in this chapter are findings which were obtained through individual semi-structured interviews, surveys, and a critical incident writing prompt, and gatekeeping artifacts. Audio from the first interview was recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Written responses from second interview questions were provided by the participants. One participant provided the gatekeeping material for their program. The critical incident writing prompt and survey were completed through Qualtrics after participants consented to participate. The data was obtained to answer the research questions below. Data analysis procedures and participant demographic information are presented in this chapter. The findings are initially presented from individual perspectives, and from the group perspective.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed:

1. How do doctoral-level students describe their lived experience of adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within counselor education?

Additional sub-questions included:

A. How do CES doctoral-level students with gatekeeping experiences describe their experiences in adapting to gatekeeping roles and responsibilities?
B. What are the lived experiences of CES doctoral-level student interactions of personal, interpersonal, and environmental factors when taking on gatekeeping roles?

C. What factors do CES doctoral-level students describe as barriers and supports during their gatekeeping experience?

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism assumes a stance that knowledge is socially constructed by the individual and sought to understand individual perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It acknowledges the role that culture and context play in how individuals construct their subjective experience. It is an inductive or bottom up research approach. Data is gathered, patterns are recognized, which inform conclusions. The research process begins with broad questions, which seek to understand the participant’s experience, and then generates hypotheses from the data. Research utilizing this paradigm is responsive to what the participants report, and frequently utilizes semi-structured interviews. The paradigm acknowledges the researcher’s biases and position within the study. Throughout the analysis the researcher attempted to understand how each participant experience was unique to them as an individual and constructed through their own historical lens. The researcher also acknowledged how their own individual perspective related to the phenomenon, and how this might impact the findings. This informed a variety of research steps and processes utilized by the researcher in order to approach the research through this paradigm.

This research began with broad research questions which were organized into a survey, a critical incident writing prompt, and a semi structured interview. After transcribing the interviews, emergent themes guided the creation of follow-up questions. A member check was
then completed to assure the accuracy of transcripts and themes. Prior to and throughout the study, reflexivity memos, external auditing, and consultation with committee members were used to attend to researcher bias.

**Personality Theory**

An understanding of personality traits informed the development of interview questions and was utilized during the data analysis. The data was interpreted through a Five Factor Model of Personality (FFM). The FFM is a trait-based approach to the construct of personality, within which the covariance of multiple personality traits is understood to be influenced by five primary personality factors (Digman & Inouye, 1986). FFM is one of the most utilized, researched, and validated models within the field of psychology (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae, 1989; Zillig et al., 2002). Within this model, personality is described using five traits: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Zillig et al., 2002). These traits are more specifically defined as level of sociability (extraversion), level of cooperation and trust (agreeableness), level of dependability and organization (conscientiousness), level of intellectual and artistic curiosity (openness to experience) and emotional stability (neuroticism). (Mount et al., 2005). These traits have been found to influence the supervision relationship and a number of behaviors pertinent to education, and counseling (Smith & Canger 2004). FFM traits impact receptivity to feedback, and how interpersonal conflict is addressed (Antonioni, 1998; Thompson et al., 2002).

Participants spoke at great length about the impact personality had during their gatekeeping experience. They described personality in a number of ways, using a variety of terms. During the data analysis participants’ statements describing personality were examined in order to determine how they linked to FFM traits.
Participants often utilized the term disposition and personality synonymously. When describing disposition participants often appeared to be describing FFM traits. The researcher chose to interpret these statements as describing an FFM trait. However, disposition also appeared to be linked to a variety of behaviors or qualities which could not solely be described as FFM traits. Statements regarding disposition which did not align with a readily identifiable FFM trait or appeared to be describing something more were not linked to FFM traits.

**Participant Data**

The sample included a total of eight doctoral-level supervisors currently enrolled at three southern CES programs accredited by The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Participants included six females and two males. Of the female participants, two identified as black or African American, two identified as Hispanic or Latinx and two identified as white females. One of the participants identified as LGBTQ+ during interviews. Of the male participants, one identified as Hispanic or Latinx, and one identified as white. Table 1 summarizes demographic data.

**Table 1.**  

**Participant Demographic Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity/Race</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Doctoral Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Hispanic or Latinx</td>
<td>Doctoral-level student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>Doctoral Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Hispanic or Latinx</td>
<td>Doctoral-level student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Doctoral Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>Doctoral Candidate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity/Race</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Hispanic or Latinx</td>
<td>Doctoral-level student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Doctoral-level student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Summarizes their supervision experience.

Table 2.

**Participant Supervision Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Length of Supervision Exp.</th>
<th>Number of Supervisees to Date</th>
<th>License Status</th>
<th>Supervision Model</th>
<th>Counseling Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Completed LPC</td>
<td>DM*</td>
<td>Humanistic/Existentialism Psychodynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>CBT, DBT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Completed LPC</td>
<td>IDM**</td>
<td>CBT, Person-Centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>10 months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Completed LPC</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>CBT, SFBT, Person-Centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>Humanist psychotherapy DM, Hogan’s Model</td>
<td>Person-Centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>Gestalt, Person-Centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Completed LPC</td>
<td>DM, Lifespan Development Model</td>
<td>Adlerian, Family Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>DM, IDM</td>
<td>EFT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Discrimination model of supervision

**Integrated developmental model of supervision
Data Analysis

This study was guided by one primary research question and three sub-questions. The primary research question was:

1. How do doctoral-level students describe their lived experience of adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within counselor education?

Additional sub-questions included:

A. How do CES doctoral-level students with gatekeeping experiences describe their experiences in adapting to gatekeeping roles and responsibilities?

B. What are the lived experiences of CES doctoral-level student interactions of personal, interpersonal, and environmental factors when taking on gatekeeping roles?

C. What factors do CES doctoral-level students describe as barriers and supports during their gatekeeping experience?

Data analysis procedures recommended by Moustakas, (1994) for conducting transcendental phenomenological research through phenomenological reduction were followed throughout the course of this study. To begin, experience of adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities as a doctoral-level student CES programs was identified by the researcher. Prior to and throughout the investigation, the researcher attempted through bracketing to set aside notions regarding the phenomenon in order to achieve epoche. After agreeing to participate, participants completed a survey and a critical incident writing prompt. Recorded audio interviews were conducted and transcribed. After transcribing individual interviews, transcripts were checked for accuracy and reviewed repeatedly. Statements were given equal value through horizontalization. Transcripts and critical incident writing prompts were examined in order to
allow emergent themes to guide the creation of follow-up questions. Statements from written responses were gathered and all statements were given equal value through horizontalization. Significant statements related to the phenomenon were identified from all data sources. Redundant and non-relevant statements were then removed leaving *statements of meaning*, which were then clustered into *clusters of meaning* in order to generate individual themes. From these individual themes, a coherent *textural description* was created which is the “what” of the experience. Imaginative variation was utilized to analyze the textural description in order to create a *structural description*, which is the “how” of the experience. A list of structural themes was then developed, and these structural themes were clustered to create individual structural descriptions. Then a composite structural description was developed through integration of the individual structural descriptions. Finally, a *synthesis* of textural and structural descriptions was created. Moustakas (1994) described synthesis as a “unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole;” that is, the integration of “what” and “how” meanings and the essence of the gatekeeping phenomenon (p. 100). Figure 1 summarizes the steps of phenomenological reduction.
Figure 1. Data analysis process.

The theme labeling process was informed by the conceptual framework presented within Chapter III. Through the phenomenological reduction process, six thematic labels emerged. Five of the primary themes also had sub-themes. Table 3 presents the themes and sub-themes derived from participants’ critical incident writing prompt and interviews. These themes represent the participants’ lived experiences of doctoral-level supervisors adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within a CES program.
Table 3

*Thematic Labels*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation</td>
<td>a. Clinical experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disposition</td>
<td>a. Gatekeeper disposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Supervisee disposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Burden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support/Barriers</td>
<td>a. Faculty supports/barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Program supports/barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Application of Experience</td>
<td>a. Professional growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Influence and Intersection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Preparation**

The participants reported feeling varied degrees of preparedness in adopting the gatekeeper role as doctoral-level supervisors. Several participants reported that they believed their program did not adequately prepare them for many of responsibilities of doctoral supervision and many of these reported feelings of frustration towards their level of preparation. Some participants reported feelings of satisfaction towards their level of preparation. At a macro-level, all the participants reported that regardless of their training, they were still able to gain confidence and competency through supervision experience.

At a micro-level, many of the participants discussed how their prior clinical experience helped prepare them for this role. Four participants had received full LPC licensure prior to beginning their doctoral studies. These participants reported that clinical experience was a support regardless of the level of preparation by the program. Participants with prior licensure stated that they utilized their prior experience to inform their approach to supervision and
reinforced their respect for gatekeeping in counselor education. Participants without licensure generally reported that the lack of extensive clinical experience made it more difficult to develop the gatekeeper role, and generally reported less familiarity with gatekeeping in counselor education.

**Disposition**

All participants identified personality traits and dispositional factors as being relevant to their supervision experience. At a macro-level, dispositional factors related to the supervisor were identified as positively and negatively impacting their experience. Personality traits such as agreeableness and openness were described occasionally as barriers. However, occasionally also described as beneficial. These traits were identified by statements such as “willingness to be open” and “willingness to continue to learn and grow”. Neuroticism, as identified in statements regarding “irritability”, “frustration”, “overthinking”, “guilt”, “fear”, and “anxiety”, was described as a barrier. Conscientiousness, as identified by statements such as: “ability to assess, be assertive and set boundaries, or expectations or accountability,”, “I am direct” and “I have to be professional” was described as helping support their experience.

Supervisee dispositional factors were also frequently discussed as supporting or creating a barrier during their experiences. A lack of receptivity towards receiving feedback was the most reported dispositional barrier. Participants frequently reported that supervisees who presented with traits of neuroticism as evidenced by descriptions such as: “defensiveness”, “reactive”, “anxious”, and “angry” were the most difficult to address in supervision.

**Responsibility**

Each participant emphasized the importance of gatekeeping within counselor education. Participants frequently stated they felt it was a necessary and a burdensome role as doctoral-level
supervisors. Every participant stated they felt that gatekeeping with counselor education was important but also difficult. They highlighted the challenging role that doctoral-level supervisors occupy. As non-faculty members, doctoral-level supervisors should only be involved in informal gatekeeping roles. However, they are required to assist faculty in monitoring and evaluating students. Several of the participants discussed incidences in which collaborating with faculty was challenging, unsuccessful, and frustrating. Many identified incidents in which they believed their concerns were ignored, and they were asked to continue supervising a student who they believed was exhibiting a PPC which faculty needed to address.

Several participants described having to relay communication between faculty and students. Some described feeling like mediators. One participant described having to act as “go-between” between their supervisee’s and faculty. Throughout these experiences doctoral-level students are being evaluated by faculty. Some participants described feeling “anxious” or “stressed” as a result of being evaluated. On a macro level they made statements regarding the responsibility that doctoral-level supervisors within CES have, and on a micro level identified the necessity of proper gatekeeping procedures as well as the burden they felt occupying this role.

Support/Barriers

Participants identified several supports and barriers during their experiences as doctoral-level supervisors. There was significant interaction and overlap between these. Several participants reported that they believed the culture of the faculty, the program, the institution, and their cohort supported their experiences. Faculty, program, and institutional culture were also identified as creating barriers during these experiences. Interactions between faculty, faculty dynamics, and the availability of faculty were also frequently discussed both in positive and
negative ways. Participants reported that they felt that their faculty, institution and fellow doctoral-level students held similar and dissimilar values which influenced their experience in adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within counselor education.

**Application of Experience**

Participants identified the application of growth as a macro level theme, and micro level themes of professional growth, personal growth, and recommendations. The participants reported experiencing growth as a result of adopting the gatekeeper role and responsibilities within counselor education. They also provided several recommendations regarding ways CES programs could better prepare and support doctoral-level students. These recommendations were suggested in order to better support the development of gatekeeper identity among doctoral-level student within CES programs. Recommendations were not considered as themes but have been included in the Appendix.

**Influence and Intersection of Identity**

The participants frequently discussed the impact and intersection of their multiple identities during their experience in adopting the gatekeeping role within CES. Some participants reported that they specifically felt their ethnic/racial background made it more difficult to develop a gatekeeper identity and made their experiences more challenging. These participants described how their resiliency and passion for the profession helped them overcome these challenges. For many of these participants they described getting support from others students from a similar racial/ethnic background or other students with a visible minority status.

Other participants made statements illustrating ways in which supervisees’ identities impacted their experiences. All participants acknowledged the importance of multicultural competence within supervision, and in providing feedback and completing evaluations. Several
participants stated that they felt that responding to the influence and intersection of identity was challenging. Some participants stated that they used their identity to educate, and model challenging conversations with their supervisees.

**Textural Descriptions**

Throughout the investigative process the researcher attempted to limit bias, to achieve epoche. This was done through bracketing prior to the start of the investigation, reflexivity memos prior to each stage, as well as consulting with an external auditor. Figure 2 outlines these steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creation of interview questions &amp; recruitment</th>
<th>Memo written</th>
<th>Consultation with dissertation chair</th>
<th>Consultation with committee members</th>
<th>Consultation with external auditor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First interviews</td>
<td>Memo written</td>
<td>Consultation with dissertation chair</td>
<td>Consultation with committee members</td>
<td>Consultation with external auditor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcription of interviews and creation of follow up questions</td>
<td>Memo written</td>
<td>Consultation with dissertation chair</td>
<td>Consultation with committee members</td>
<td>Consultation with external auditor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial coding</td>
<td>Memo written</td>
<td>Consultation with dissertation chair</td>
<td>Consultation with external auditor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of thematic labels</td>
<td>Memo written</td>
<td>Consultation with dissertation chair</td>
<td>Consultation with external auditor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2.* Steps to limit bias.

After completing these steps, themes were developed by examining textural descriptions from each participant. Quotes used in this were taken from the participants’ critical incident writing prompt, recorded interviews, and written follow-up questions. The following section
presents individual textural descriptions which were identified by the research and then grouped into themes.

**Individual Textural Descriptions**

In this section, textural descriptions for every individual are presented, as well as a data summary table. Themes developed according to the procedures outline previously were utilized to create individual textural descriptions for every individual. Participants’ statements were organized by the researcher in order to align within the theme they portray. The purpose is to illustrate what each participant experienced.

**David**

David is a licensed third-year doctoral candidate in a CES doctoral program. He reported having supervised nine master's students within his program over the course of two years and is currently supervising three students. David reported that he utilizes the discrimination model with the integrated developmental model of supervision (IDM) for evaluation purposes for supervision and utilizes humanistic-existentialism, and psychodynamic theories for counseling. David stated that he had five years of clinical experience in private practice, hospital, agency, and school-based settings prior to beginning the program.

**Preparation.** David described his experience of preparation by his doctoral program in a somewhat conflicting manner. He stated that although he had received some preparation for gatekeeping prior to the start of his supervision, he believed his preparation was ultimately insufficient:

> It felt like the seed was planted, but no instruction or guidance was truly provided beyond lecture and discussion (David, interview).

In addition, he reported that he believed that gatekeeping was addressed more often after doctoral-level students had encountered supervisees exhibiting a PPC. For example, he stated:
But prior to that, it wasn't something that was talked about or addressed. So, that level of preparation I don't feel like was there until it happens (David, interview).

David identified the sub-theme of prior clinical experience as significant in his experience, and as a support:

Gatekeeping was discussed as a responsibility of all counselors and a role I would assume as I trained and became a licensed professional (David, critical incident journal).

**Disposition.** Statements by David appeared to link to the primary theme, as well as sub-themes. He discussed how his own disposition, including his personality traits, as well as those of the supervisees, were impactful in his experience. He stated, “[gatekeeping] comes down to a lot of internal disposition and mindset” (David, interview). He continued by describing how the gatekeeper disposition was a key factor:

It’s that intrinsic... just desire, not desire. I don't think anybody wants to take on that role... that just natural ability to assess, be assertive, and set boundaries, or expectations or accountability measures to that need to be upheld and when they're not, you don't have that leniency (David, interview).

He also identified what dispositional qualities of supervisees acted as a support or barrier for gatekeeping:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality traits that are supportive:</th>
<th>Personality traits that are barriers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Openness/receptivity to feedback</td>
<td>Resistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to integrate changes effectively</td>
<td>Combative/Argumentative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective and insightful/introspective</td>
<td>Lack of sense of responsibility/irresponsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth mindset</td>
<td>Self-deprecating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Lack of insight/obtuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(David, interview).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

David described the role disposition plays in the gatekeeping phenomenon as impactful overall to initiate gatekeeping procedures. David described what a successful gatekeeper looks like as an individual with “the disposition to take that on, and also model it” (David, interview). He also described which supervisee’s qualities might necessitate gatekeeping for a supervisee, and which
dispositional qualities can impact a supervisee’s learning outcomes. Specifically, he highlighted receptivity to feedback:

Overall, it appears their willingness to collaborate with the instructor/supervisor and receptivity to feedback followed by their ability to incorporate feedback and make necessary changes to be effective in the counselor role (David, critical incident).

**Responsibility.** David frequently mentioned the responsibilities doctoral-level supervisors have in acting as part of the gatekeeping processes in CES. He described gatekeeping as a necessary burden for doctoral-level supervisors to “protect” clients, the profession, as well as the supervisee. David described the gatekeeping role as an ongoing “active role”:

It just takes a back seat to a lot of the other hats we have to wear. Even though it's like a mini-hat underneath all the other hats, it’s constantly there (David, interview).

He also states that he believes gatekeeping is unlikely to happen post-graduation and believes this increases the need for adequate gatekeeping in CES:

Once students get into the field or beyond their program I'm not sure how much field supervisors are doing intentionally to function in that role. (David, interview)

**Support/Barriers.** Primary and sub-themes of support and barriers were present in David’s statements. He identified what faculty did to support his experience, reporting that some faculty had “modeled” what gatekeeping looked like and describing some faculty as “very supportive” during his experiences. He also stated that he had received guidance and collaborated positively with faculty when responding to some supervisees with a PPC:

I attempted to address the issue directly, however the supervisee’s response prompted me to consult with faculty. As personal and professional issues continued to develop, the faculty increased their involvement related to coursework concerns. The supervisee was directed to a [disposition review form] PCR (professional characteristics review) where we collaborated with the supervisee to develop an appropriate plan of action to ensure they received the necessary support and ability to meet required milestones to function as a competent counselor-in-training. The supervisee remained under review (1 year) until the middle of their final semester prior to graduating where faculty determined the supervisee had met criteria to no longer be under review. (David, critical incident)
David also described the academic rigor of his program as a support. He reported that he believed the Research One (R1) status of his university was an aspect of the program which supported his gatekeeping experiences. He compared his program with other CES programs by stating:

Both programs that I attended were R1 institutions, I think very reputable programs. It probably could have been different if it was like a smaller institution. I think there's other influences in terms of like enrollment (David, interview).

David reported that when he supervised students exhibiting a PPC, he brought his concerns to faculty members. According to David, the steps faculty and the program took to respond to these concerns appeared to vary, and his involvement in these processes varied as well. When asked to identify ways his faculty members acted as barriers in addressing PPCs, he stated:

It felt chaotic as it didn’t appear to be an effective or collaborative effort among faculty or with me as a supervisor. Communication was delayed and often disorganized, with messages not always communicated with all parties. When it came to taking action, faculty would have reasons to not attend at the last instances and it felt like a chore (David, critical incident).

David contrasted his experiences as doctoral-level supervisor with his experiences during co-instruction stating: “as a co-instructor, it feels like there is more support and guidance. The dialogue happens more directly and collaboratively with the faculty member where you can discuss potential next steps.” (David, interview).

**Application of experience.** David made several statements regarding the application of his gatekeeping experiences. He described the professional and personal growth that resulted and discussed the recommendations for CES he had as a result. Regarding professional growth, he became “more comfortable or confident” as result of his gatekeeping experiences. David identified what he had learned to communicate to students and supervisees about gatekeeping:
I state to all students now, not only to my supervisees: “This is the time that you receive the most support so there’s no better time than now to address the concerns or the areas of development of growth that are needed before it’s too late.” This is the time in which you can be best prepared for situations and that it's not an attack, and it’s hard to not take it personally but it's a an identification of “hey, here’s something we notice as a concern that needs to be developed, we all have something and we're saying that we believe that you can work on this. But this is what you need to do.” It's giving you an opportunity to respond. (David, interview)

The influence and intersection of identity. David did not mention his own identity as being a significant factor during his experiences. However, he did acknowledge what role it played with his supervisees. In particular, he noted the importance of addressing identity particularly with supervisees of color, different ability status, non-traditional students, and parents, stating:

I have to be mindful of how the student […] identifies and will likely respond to my position of being in a power position and having several factors of privilege. So, how might students I’m working with see me as an oppressor or associate me with other negative personal influences in their life. Ultimately though, this is a professional issue, not personal. The circumstances I’ve experienced with gatekeeping often becomes personalized where the students reflect it’s because of the color of their skin, because they have children, working multiple jobs, disability, etc. not because they are lacking in professional skills. (David, interview)

Organized by thematic labels, Table 4 provides additional participant data to support the above textural description for David.

Table 4.

Data Summary Table: David

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation</td>
<td>“It felt like the seed was planted, but no instruction or guidance was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Clinical experience</td>
<td>truly provided beyond lecture and discussion”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think reading about it and talking about it isn’t enough.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. ”Additionally, in regards to the profession as a whole, we typically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>don’t hear or are exposed to any gatekeeping practices outside of academia.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67
Table 4 (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation</td>
<td>a. Gatekeeping was discussed as a responsibility of all counselors and a role I would assume as I trained and became a licensed professional….My current understanding and role of gatekeeping has shifted since beginning the PhD program and serving as a co-instructor and supervisor.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Clinical experience</td>
<td>a. “I think having the clinical experience knowing what these future counselors will be exposed to have to, work with. So, you want to ensure that those clients welfare is accounted for.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disposition</td>
<td>a. “I think for me is that that comes down to a lot of internal disposition and mindset.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Gatekeeper</td>
<td>a. “Somebody's disposition to take that on and also model it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Supervisee</td>
<td>a. “I think of the disposition... One of the instructors a lot of students gravitated towards. They're very nurturing nature or disposition. And they would not likely be somebody who would take on that like gatekeeping role, as assertively as this other faculty member, and because of discussions I've had with this faculty member they they've often been the ones that are involved in those procedures, and then have this association to having that role. So, it comes down to them being the ones.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. “Naturally, students who are able to become less anxious and experience growth, rather than be hindered by what they perceive as failure have a stronger ability to receive guidance and become empowered.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Responsibility</td>
<td>a. “Gatekeeping is protecting our practice and our client and the welfare of clients. Confronting and working on the development of counseling and interpersonal skills”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Necessity</td>
<td>a. “So, I think even having the clinical experience knowing like what these future counselors will be exposed to have to, work with, and so you want to ensure that those clients welfare is accounted for”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Burden</td>
<td>b. “It’s an active role. Boom that's what it is, it's an active role You are an active gatekeeper at all times”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Support/Barriers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Faculty</td>
<td>“It felt chaotic as it didn’t appear to be an effective or collaborative effort among faculty or with me as a supervisor. Communication was delayed and often disorganized, with messages not always communicated with all parties. When it came to taking action, faculty would have reasons to not attend at the last instances and it felt like a chore”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Program</td>
<td>a. “I’ve had those conversations with faculty members at other institutions where they’re the one person that’s involved in it rather than it being committee, it’s this one person that’s in charge of it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. “The institutional piece would be the support from that institution or that culture I think that’s where the politics or the difficulty can lay despite even if you have multiple faculty members on the same page you have a lot of resistance that you have to get through to uphold these values that we state as a profession”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. “My personal experiences of attending larger research-oriented institutions and programs, it appears gatekeeping has a prominent and serious role among faculty and even PhD students. As I previously mentioned, there have been several process and occurrences where I have had to engage in a remediation or conduct review with a student and faculty. However, depending on the faculty member, it seems the guidance and collaboration is lacking for students.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Application</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Professional</td>
<td>“One thing I mentioned that improved that I state to all students now, not only to my supervisees: “this is the time that you receive the most support so there’s no better time now to address the concerns or the areas of development of growth that are needed. Before it’s too late”. This is the time in which you can be best prepared for situations and that it's not an attack, and it's hard to not take it personally but it's a an identification of “hey here's something we notice as a concern that needs to be developed, we all have something and we're saying that we believe that you can work on this. But, this is what you need to do”. It's giving you an opportunity to respond.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Personal growth</td>
<td>a. “I feel more comfortable or confident that I would be able to handle and address the issue diplomatically.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Influence and Intersection of Identity</td>
<td>“I have to mindful of how the student [...] identifies and will likely respond to my position of being in a power position and having several factors of privilege. So, how might students I’m working with see me as an oppressor or associate me with other negative personal influences in their life. Ultimately though, this is a professional issue, not personal.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emily

Emily is an unlicensed current doctoral-level student in her second year in a CES program. She reported having supervised four master's students within her program over the course of one year and stated that she is not currently supervising students. Emily reported that she utilizes the discrimination model of supervision for supervision and reported utilizing cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), solution focused brief therapy (SFBT), and person-centered theories for counseling. Emily reported having clinical experience as a counselor intern at an alternative high school prior to beginning the doctoral program.

**Preparation.** Emily reported that she was not sufficiently prepared by her program prior to supervision for the gatekeeper role. She stated her program covered gatekeeping during her ethics course, but at no other point prior to her supervision experiences. When asked to describe her awareness of the gatekeeping processes at her institution, at that time, she stated, “I wasn’t sure about the process at all. We hadn't gone over it in supervision.” Additionally, she stated that she did not align with a supervision model “until maybe the middle or second half of the semester.” She reported that she experienced a student exhibiting a PPC during her first semester.
of supervision and struggled to provide feedback. She described her experience of addressing this supervisee as:

So, it was more like me actively asking questions about it. Now it's in the Handbook so we're always referred to the Handbook, and I know we should read the Handbook, in reality, how many people read the Handbook unless they really have to? So, and that's kind of what you get like as per the Handbook the doctoral or master's Handbook. So, I didn't have good insight to what the process was. I actively asked my instructor “So what happens here?”, and it was “Well, let's have her send a second video” and I asked, “What happens if we don't see these skills at all?” The answer was “when we get to that bridge, we will cross it” (Emily, interview).

Emily made statements which linked to the sub-theme of what role clinical experience played in her preparation. She stated that she felt that her limited clinical experience negatively impacted her experience in adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities. For example, she stated:

“I kind of felt like, oh, I was just [recently] a master’s student, um, so I was very nervous and then I was also very... I wanted to do a good job, so I was kind of hyper-aware of what was going on.” (Emily, interview).

**Disposition.** Emily made several statements regarding what ways disposition and personality factors influenced her gatekeeping experience. Sub-themes of gatekeeper and supervisee disposition were identified. Emily reported that her disposition frequently made her experience of gatekeeping more challenging. Regarding what ways her own disposition acted as a barrier she stated, “I'm not a very assertive person and confrontation is very difficult for me when I sense confrontation coming on, I get really red” (Emily, interview).

Emily also reported that in academic settings her ability to respond empathetically was limited, stating:

I'm a kind person overall but in academia, no... I feel like I have less empathy about some academia stuff. For example, if students start complaining about work, they have to do, or essays or extra assignments...Well “that's grad school, welcome to grad school (Emily, interview).

Emily also identified in what ways her disposition helped establish rapport and build the supervisory alliance. In particular, she identified the use of humor as helpful, stating:
I use humor a lot, so I tend to joke a lot and I do use that in the supervision sessions to make them very lighthearted and to get my supervisees to relax a little more. When I showed a video to class that was one of the suggestions from my cohort. I naturally use humor and I’m actually funny. So, to use more of my personality and it'll help the relationship build more (Emily, interview).

When asked to describe how supervisees’ personality traits influenced the gatekeeping process, she identified ways it could act as a barrier or support. She identified receptivity to feedback as an important personality trait, stating:

Supervisees who were open to feedback during the process seemed to have a positive experience. Although they were required to do extra work, their genuine passion for learning more allowed the process to be smooth. In contrast, supervisees who were closed off to feedback, seemed to have a negative experience. Usually their growth was minimal because they were not heeding the advice from the site supervisor, doctoral-level supervisor (myself), or the instructor. This meant the gatekeeping process would have to keep moving forward because the student was showing minimal to no change….As stated before, personality traits open to feedback, willingness to learn, and passion for the field support the gatekeeping process. It allows for a more competent counselor to come out of the other side. Supervisees closed off to feedback will experience more struggle throughout the program and gatekeeping process (Emily, interview).

**Responsibility.** Emily made several statements describing what makes gatekeeping a necessity within CES. She described gatekeeping as imperative, stating:

We are trying to get people to trust mental health providers a lot more. It's a complete disservice to the mental health community when they meet somebody, and that person isn't trained properly, or they slipped through the cracks and that's their first impression with the counselor. I get upset with myself when I'm second guessing a lot of my decisions. Because I think it's very essential in our profession (Emily, interview).

Emily also discussed what she felt like were burdens during her experiences. Time was described as a burden and mentioned several times by Emily. She reported that although they felt gatekeeping was essential they were “starting to see that the further I get into the program the less time I have available” making the gatekeeping experience more challenging stating “time can be a barrier”.

**Support/Barriers.** Emily described her program and faculty as primarily supportive during in her experiences. She stated: “faculty was very supportive and provided me with the

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initial direction of my gatekeeping role”. She described her experience when addressing a supervisee exhibiting a PPC as, “It was a process of going to my supervisor and then going to the instructor just seeing if our experiences aligned... they asked me for my ideas”. Emily reported concerns regarding the level of gatekeeping in other degree tracks within her program stating, I cannot say the same about school counselors because I know there are different state requirements.... This makes it difficult to see school counselors as mental health providers in the schools (Emily, critical incident).

Emily, reported that she believed her gatekeeping experiences were impacted by her role within the program, and her relationship with faculty:

We're doing supervision and then we have supervisors and sometimes we have multiple supervisors and it seems like it's kind of like that for everybody where we're in this limbo of how much authority do we really have as a supervisor with the practicum student how like how much should we expect being their doc supervisor? And that that feels like the biggest challenge to get over because what happens is we're second guessing our decisions throughout the process so I feel like it actually takes a little longer for us to make a decision and to make a move on something that it really should if we were faculty. Because, we're still trying to figure out where we are in this gatekeeping totem pole with them (Emily, interview).

**Application of Experience.** Emily described how these experiences influenced her professional growth. She stated that as result of these experiences, she was “more willing to speak with my site supervisor and the instructor” and “I'm more willing to take on assignments with more responsibility” as result of her experience (Emily, interview). She reported that these experiences influenced her approach to supervision stating “I had to adopt more of my counseling skills when I was a supervisor” (Emily, interview). Emily stated that she believed that these experiences illustrated how professional development is facilitated by experience:

I'm able to develop... those assertiveness skills that you need as a supervisor and then as a counselor educator. I think what I'm showing myself is as a future counselor educator, and as a doc student, is I'm able to get stuff done when it needs to get done. I'm able to develop skills I need in order to do something (Emily, interview).
Emily also spoke at length describing in what ways her personal growth was impacted. She believed that these experiences improved her assertiveness, and ability to set boundaries; “I actually say it in my daily life. If somebody tries to sell something to me “I'm like, let me stop you right there” (Emily, interview). Her experiences were described as something she wants to apply in future interactions as a counselor educator, “when we become faculty we need to hold on to our experiences so we can reach out to doc students more and let them in on the process”.

**Influence and Intersection of Identity.** Emily stated that “there are many multicultural concerns with gatekeeping” and identified a lack of multicultural awareness as one of the primary reasons gatekeeping procedures are likely to be initiated. She described in what ways supervisor and supervisee identities can influence the relationship. Emily discussed ways in which her identity as a Hispanic female impacted her experience:

> I questioned myself throughout the process, wondering if I was being hypervigilant. As someone either close to the age of the supervisee, or younger than the supervisee, I wanted to make sure I was taken seriously. I’ve also heard the advice from other Hispanic females to not be afraid to use your voice. Usually we are rendered silent because of our status as a minority and our gender. We have to vigilant about being heard. This is another reason why I second guessed my need to share my experiences with the supervisee. I wondered if the supervisee was truly struggling or if I was testing that I was heard by the supervisee and my supervisors? (Emily, interview).

Additionally, she stated:

> In my culture it is expected to show respect to older generations by not questioning their methods. However, you must question the methods of your supervisees. The supervisee may have been brought up the same way, so they have an expectation from a young supervisor. I have to push past this awkwardness in our sessions by being confident in my assertiveness skills. It seems like a parallel process to the multicultural concerns related to counseling. Culture can influence the dynamics of the supervisor-supervisee relationship (Emily, interview).

These statements speak to what role identity played in Emily’s experience, and in which ways her identity as a woman intersected with her Hispanic identity and culture.
Organized by thematic label, Table 5 provides additional participant data to support the above textural description for Emily.

Table 5

*Data Summary Table: Emily*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation</td>
<td><strong>a. Clinical experience</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think the first, my first very first session, I was sitting there like “Well, I'm your doc supervisor, hello”. We didn't have an idea of how to start this relationship with them.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a. “I kind of felt like, oh, I was just a master student, um, so I was very nervous and then I was also very..., I wanted to do a good job, so I was kind of hyper-aware of what was going on.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. “There's me who just graduated a year ago should I be doing this and then that makes you second guess what's going on what you're doing. So that's the imposter syndrome.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Disposition</td>
<td><strong>a. Gatekeeper</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. “I think a big barrier is usually within myself. Feeling confident and competent to be able to supervise...so it's really having to overcome that imposter syndrome within me.”</td>
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</table>
|                         | b. “My own personality... I like to think I'm a kind person overall but in academia not. Even though I'm in the field of counseling I feel like I have less empathy about some academia stuff. For example, if students start complaining about work, they have to do, or essays or extra assignments...Well “that's grad school, welcome to grad school”. I noticed that for supervision, the key thing is building that relationship with your supervisee. Where they're open with you, similar to counseling experience. So, I couldn't take that approach with them, where my academic personality is very much you know “suck it up buttercup let's go”.

<p>|                         | a. “I have to be very empathic with them and I have to be very open in um kind of just like more willing to listen to what's going on in order to for them to be very honest with me about their cases” |</p>
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<tr>
<td>2. Disposition</td>
<td>a. “Supervisees who were closed off to feedback seemed to have a negative experience. Usually their growth was minimal because they were not heeding the advice from the site supervisor, doctoral-level supervisor (myself), or the instructor. This meant the gatekeeping process would have to keep moving forward because the student was showing minimal to no change.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Burden</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Support/Barriers</td>
<td>a. Faculty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Program</td>
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Table 5 (Cont.)

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<th>Theme</th>
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| 4. Support/Barriers        | a. “However, they only provided me with the initial steps or the steps they felt I would have to be involved in ...was not informed about the entirety of the gatekeeping process.”  
   a. “Faculty are also amazing role models in voicing their opinions about the development of a student and taking action. I believe my program prepares us well for the role.”  
   a. “I think a lot of the supports really are: one the professor's um because they're very easy to approach. If I feel like I'm having an issue I'm not scared to go to them and ask them for help or to inform them of what's going on, so that's a big. The other thing too is aside from being approachable the professors are very verbal about how we are sending people out there to help other people sometimes in their darkest time. So, we need to make sure we're sending out the best or at least not sending anybody out that's going to be harmful. They reiterate that a lot.”  
   b. “I have an amazing cohort. We are on the cohort system here, and so I have an amazing supportive cohort. We're very open when we're discussing in class about our experiences as a doc student. During supervision, and even now after the supervision class we still openly discussed their supervision experiences. So, that normalizes our feelings a lot, and we can also discuss things out loud...So, I have an amazing cohort too that helps so other doc students also. I think that those are my two main systems my cohort and the instructors.” |
| 5. Application of Experience | a. “It's really shown me at being a counselor educator how much of a voice I need to be willing to have once I graduate as a beginning faculty 'I'm able to speak to them about it rather than kind of shying away’”  
   a. I'm more willing to speak with my site supervisor and the instructor too.” |
Table 5 (Cont.)

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<th>Statements</th>
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<tr>
<td>5. Application of Experience</td>
<td>a. “I am more assertive as a supervisor. It helps me if there is a master student that maybe forgets about professionalism or our expectations when interacting with the client. I’m more likely to bring it up immediately rather than I need to go talk to somebody, and then come back in muster up the confidence to be able to talk to this person about.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Professional growth</td>
<td>b. “I've started to build confidence within myself”</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Personal growth</td>
<td>b. “I think I was told at the beginning of the program that you end up coming out a different person. And I thought you just came out of more stressed person at the end of it. But I really do see the personality difference within me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. “We have to start supervising within the first week of the semester it's the first week of the semester. We haven't really taken our class, but we need to start talking to this practicum students. So, I think I would want something, I want to be prepped a little more for that.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Influence and Intersection of Identity</td>
<td>“There are many multicultural concerns with gatekeeping.”</td>
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Sharon

Sharon is a licensed current doctoral candidate in her third year at a CES program. She reported having supervised seven master's students within her program over the course of two years and stated that she is currently not supervising students. Sharon reported that she utilizes the IDM for supervision and reported utilizing CBT integrated with a person-centered approach for counseling. She reported that her clinical experience prior to the doctoral program included a one-year internship at a university counseling center, and two years of a registered internship in school-based mental health counseling students.

Preparation. Sharon reported dissatisfaction with the procedures used to prepare them for gatekeeping. She stated, “I did not feel well-prepared for the challenges
presented to me by my supervisor.” (Sharon, interview). Sharon acknowledged that abstract concepts such as accreditation standards were discussed within the program, but felt the concrete gatekeeping processes at her institution were not explicitly described, stating:

I thought we had explained what the gatekeeping process would look like. We talk about all those CACREP standards of students have to reach, but... it's quite weird. It's funny with gatekeeping, you just don't see it happen. (Sharon, interview)

As a result, Sharon reported feeling concerned about her ability to adopt the gatekeeper role, address a supervisee with a PPC, and act as a part of the gatekeeping process. For example, she stated:

I'm a new supervisor, I'm not even the supervision guru. So, am I even really qualified to be doing this, especially if it's a student who is more difficult? So, having that kind of imposter syndrome around, like "Am I the woman for the job? I don't know… When students are more challenging, I'm like, "Uh-oh, I don't know what to do with this?" (Sharon, interview)

Sharon reported that she believed her prior clinical experience helped her as a supervisor, and made assuming some gatekeeping responsibilities easier:

I would say having clinical experience…. Having hands-on clinical experience I think helped. Because then I'm able to draw from those experiences in supervision, and a lot of my supervisees worked with underserved clients and clients with a lot of high needs in that area that I'm very passionate about so I could draw from that. (Sharon, interview)

Disposition. Sharon identified several ways her disposition was a factor which shaped her experiences. She described irritability and conscientiousness as traits she believed were impactful on the gatekeeping role. When asked to identify what she had learned about herself as result of these experiences, she stated, “Probably that I am very irritable!” (Sharon, interview).

She described the ways in which her conscientiousness impacted her experiences with the following quote:

My own interpersonal kind of stuff. Well, I would say in a professional setting, I feel like I have to be professional. I feel like you have to bring your “A-game.” So, if I'm meeting with a professional, I'm meeting with my supervisor, I'm going to be on time, I'm going
to be prepared, I'm going to be respectful of them. I think that's just how I feel like you do school. (Sharon, interview)

Sharon continued by stating that she is passionate about the profession, and holding supervisees accountable stating:

   I really want to carry the profession forward….Like is this really not a problem? Am I just exaggerating? So, I guess my own guilt because you don't want to be that person who is always has something negative to say (Sharon, interview).

She spoke at greater length regarding ways in which supervisee’s dispositions impacted her experiences and gatekeeping generally. Sharon described the supervisees’ professionalism, receptivity to feedback, and conscientiousness as traits which significantly impacted her experiences, stating, “three of them were pretty problematic with regards to professionalism, being late, being unprepared, being just really not committed.” When prompted to identify her most salient gatekeeping experiences, she wrote the following in her critical incident prompt:

   I had a supervisee that was consistently late to supervision meetings and sometimes missed supervision sessions without communication. In addition, supervisee was often unprepared for supervision with no tape or materials to present in session. I don't know if it was because I was a doctoral-level supervisor, and they didn't see me as a...being late, people not bringing tapes, they were required to do like four tapes. I asked my students to bring tapes every week and they wouldn't bring anything, a lot of pushback on stuff like that. Issues at the site, like inappropriate dress, being late to their sites, probably the same thing that was happening in the supervision relationship being mimicked at the site, inappropriate conversations with clients... It's hard to develop as a supervisor with supervisee who doesn’t want to work (Sharon, critical incident).

When prompted to identify what supervisees’ personality traits acted as supports and barriers towards gatekeeping, she identified the following:

   Support:          Barriers:
   Honesty           Arrogance
   Desire to learn   Sensitive to feedback
   Humility.
   (Sharon, interview).

When prompted to describe how supervisees’ personality traits influenced the gatekeeping process, including gatekeeping outcomes, she wrote:
I believe supervisees who appeared humbled, confused, remorseful were less likely to receive harsh feedback even if their skills/behaviors were not up to par (Sharon, interview).

**Responsibility.** Sharon described in detail how she felt gatekeeping was a necessary but significant burden for doctoral-level supervisors. She described the role of gatekeeping as necessary for the following reasons:

Protecting potential clients from counselors who may be harmful because they are not upholding the code of ethics, they’re not professional. I just don’t think everybody should be a counselor. So, when I think of gatekeeping, I think of trying to protect the public from both people and protect the profession from people who are inappropriate for the profession (Sharon, interview).

Sharon stated she believes that gatekeeping is necessary, she reported that she did not believe her program or the profession upholds appropriate gatekeeping standards. Sharon stated that she was frustrated by her program’s gatekeeping policies, procedures and her role within the process, as demonstrated by the following quote:

As a doc student, here it is, I'm going to be honest. I was over it. It's some bullshit. I don't know if I can say this in your interview. But I am busy. You a doc student, you know, we got so much to do, we teaching, we're busy, we writing papers. If I got to take out time. Because we have three supervisees at a time, if I’m required about three hours a week for individual supervision. That's not including reviewing tape, that's not including reviewing transcripts, that's not including going to my supervision of supervision, and you can't even come into supervision prepared. I don't want to do this. As a doc student, I did not want to do it. I'm fed up with this because this is a waste of my time (Sharon, interview).

**Support/Barriers.** Sharon described the cohort model of her program as support during her experiences, “I am a cohort of nine and we were all in the same supervision class and we would talk about our supervisees in our class.” Sharon described faculty and other aspects of her program as significant barriers. Regarding program faculty, she stated:

Faculty acted as barriers by not taking my concerns seriously. They listened but there was rarely any follow-up….. I spoke to my supervisor several times and documented the supervisees’ behaviors, but no action was taken. (Sharon, interview)
In addition to feeling frustrated with faculty, she identified the program as a barrier during her experience stating: “I do not think my program enforces gatekeeping as forcefully as it could because of the legal/political ramifications associated with removing a student from a public university” (Sharon, interview). During her interview, Sharon stated that she believed her program does not have a culture “that supports gatekeeping” (Sharon, interview). She identified institution size and the focus of the program as the primary reasons stating:

It's just in my experience of gatekeeping that I don't think happens in massive programs like it should…. The program is large, and its focus is on research. I don't even know if people really care if the counselors are strong. I bet they want them to be ethical and have a knowledge base but are they, are they doing it? I don't know if that really matters (Sharon, interview)

The participant stated that she believed that these issues were likely present at other programs:

This is a problem across the country, probably across campuses that people really don't know what to do with these students who are not necessarily ethical, or terrible, horrible hurting people but they also not helping nobody either. (Sharon, interview).

**Application of experience.** Sharon did not make statements regarding professional or personal growth. Sharon identified what she would like to change and recommend to CES programs as a result of these experiences.

**The influence and intersection of identity.** Sharon spoke frequently about how her own identity impacted her experiences during interviews. She stated:

I feel like being colored I am held to a higher standard. So, you can't come half steppin’ because it's really going to be a problem. So, I think that might have been something... Then I see students is doing whatever. I'm like, "Oh everybody is not held to these same rules." So, I think that's my own stuff I need to work through like, "Oh everybody don't have to work the same level of hard or the same preparedness” (Sharon, interview).

In her follow-up questions she further explained her experiences by writing:

I felt my identity as an African American woman, supervising white students made it more difficult for my feedback to be judged as credible. I would say this was the case with faculty, but other student concerns were also not taking seriously (Sharon, interview).
They also wrote to how they felt identity impacted her classmate’s experiences, “I believe that white students receive more leeway when compared to students of color.” During her first interview they described a colleague who they felt should have been gate kept but was not, stating the following:

I had a classmate who had a supervisee…client who is a white male, a former police officer… with some very strong views about people of color. He was working with disenfranchised young black boys who were in this program. He was just inappropriate (Sharon, interview).

This appeared to be a significant theme for Sharon. Throughout the study, she spoke at length and with great passion about the impact identity had upon her experiences and on gatekeeping generally. She spoke about fairness and inconsistency. She was concerned about how these factors might shape her experiences in the future stating, “I'm going to be at a very white school. I took a job at a very white school in a very white state, so it will be interesting to see how it's going to play out.” (Sharon, interview).

Organized by thematic label, Table 6 provides additional participant data to support the above textural description for Sharon.

Table 6

Data Summary Table: Sharon

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation</td>
<td>“Gatekeeping was introduced to me as a master’s student.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Clinical</td>
<td>a. &quot;I would say having clinical experience. So, when I came back for the doc program I was licensed, I mean I'm not like 50 years like Yalom. But just having hands on clinical experience, I think helped because then I'm able to draw from those experiences in supervision and a lot of my supervisees worked with underserved clients and clients with a lot of high needs in that area that I'm very passionate about so I could draw from that.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Gatekeeper</td>
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<td>b. Supervisee</td>
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### Themes

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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Disposition</strong>&lt;br&gt;a. Gatekeeper&lt;br&gt;b. Supervisee</td>
<td>b. “I would say probably three of them were pretty problematic with regards to professionalism, being late, being unprepared, being just really not committed. I don't know if it was because I was a doctoral-level supervisor, and they didn't see me as a... being late, people not bringing tapes, they were required to do like four tapes. I asked my students could they bring tapes every week and they wouldn't bring anything, a lot of pushback on stuff like that, issues at the site, like inappropriate dress, being late to their sites, probably the same thing that was happening in the supervision relationship being mimicked at the site, inappropriate conversations with clients...”&lt;br&gt;a. “Gatekeeping was introduced to me as a master’s student. My professors and supervisors explained that their role is to protect the general public by ensuring that counselors are abiding by ethical standards set by the profession. Gatekeeping as well as skill developed seemed to be the reason for so much supervision during the initial counseling training.”&lt;br&gt;b. “It’s about protecting potential clients from counselors who may be harmful because they are not upholding the code of ethics, they're not professional and they... I just don't think everybody should be in counselors. So, when I think of gatekeeping, I think of trying to protect the public from both people and protect the profession from people who are inappropriate for the profession.”&lt;br&gt;a. “Who has time to set them up with my own professional development plan? Not my professors because they busy.”&lt;br&gt;a. “Faculty acted as barriers by not taking my concerns seriously. They listened but there was rarely any follow-up.”&lt;br&gt;a. “I don't think that professors are meeting with the students one on one every week. Most internships require two videos to be shown throughout the semester but you're seeing something they do every single week, so you really get to know them. So, if you ask you...”&lt;br&gt;</td>
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| 4. Support/Barriers            | a. “I don't think that professors are meeting with the students one on one every week. Most internships require two videos to be shown throughout the semester but you're seeing something they do every single week, so you really get to know them. So, if you ask you basically got your eyes on the street, really close to them and then people are not really accepting your opinion.”
| a. Faculty                     | a. “In a cohort of nine and we were all in the same supervision class and we would talk about our supervisees in our class.”                                                                                   |
| b. Program                     | b. “It's so hard as a doc student. I might not even have any power. If I was a professor, and I don't see me having all this power, but at least I have something, maybe something to stand on.”                                |
| b.                             | b. “It was interesting because when I went on an on-campus interview, one of the questions was, "How do you feel about gatekeeping?" I basically gave the same spiel. "I think it should happen, but I don’t think it does." And they basically was like, "Yes." So, this is like, this is a problem across the country, probably across campuses that people really don’t know what to do with these students who are not necessarily ethical, or terrible, horrible hurting people but they also not helping nobody either.” |
| 5. Application of Experience   | b. “It's a master's program and a doc program it's not a cohort model. The program is large and it’s a focus on research. I don’t even know if people really care if the counselors are strong. I bet they want them to be ethical and have a knowledge base but are they, are they do it? I don’t know if that really matters”
| a. Professional growth         | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| b. Personal growth             |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 6. Influence and Intersection  | “I had a classmate who had ... some very strong views about people of color. He was working with disenfranchised young black boys who were in this program. He was just inappropriate”                                 |
| of Identity                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
Table 6 (Cont.)

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<tr>
<td>6.Influence and Intersection</td>
<td>“I feel like being colored, [people of color] are held to a higher standard, so you can’t come half steppin’ because it’s really going to be a problem. So, I think that might have been something that could play and then I see students is doing whatever. I’m like, ”Oh everybody is not held to these same rules.” So, I think that’s my own stuff I need to work through like, ”Oh, everybody don’t have to work the same level of hard or the same preparedness”.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>of Identity</td>
<td>“I’d probably have to be more vocal about this. Because I am like this is ridiculous, it’s ridiculous. And I’m going to at a very white school. I took a job at a very white school in a very white state, so it will be interested to see how it’s going to play out.”</td>
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**Maria**

Maria is a licensed doctoral-level student in her second year at a CES program. She reported having supervised two master’s students within her program over the course of two months and is not currently supervising students within her program. Maria reported that she utilizes the discrimination model for supervision and reported that she utilizes CBT, SFBT, and person-centered theories for counseling. Maria completed her LPC licensure prior to beginning the doctoral program, is currently the lead counselor at her work, and is supervising two staff LPC-Interns.

**Preparation.** Maria reported that her training for gatekeeping was insufficient. Maria described her training as follows:

In my opinion, I was not as well-prepared as I would like to have been for the gatekeeper role. Going over scenarios did help, however, I feel if the professors took the time to go over the gatekeeping role as it is outlined in the student handbooks and the procedures for mitigating the effects of reporting incidents of concerns would have made me feel better and more information about the steps for gatekeeping (Maria, interview ).
She reported that she felt gatekeeping should also be addressed at the master’s-level:

In the doctoral, I feel gatekeeping is emphasized more than in the master’s-level. In my opinion, gatekeeping is a topic that should be discussed in the master’s extensively as the number of master student greatly outnumber the doctoral-level students. (Maria, interview).

Maria reported that prior clinical experience did help prepare them for her experience stating:

I'm a fully licensed counselor, and so going into the doc program as a fully licensed counselor, I made myself more aware of the rules. We do have to attend training to continuously educate ourselves on current events, on the current ethics that we have. So, I feel like I have enough hours to say that I'm well aware of some of the issues that come up as far as ... that fall under the gatekeeping umbrella (Maria, interview).

Disposition. Several statements made by Maria illustrated what dispositional qualities helped support her as a gatekeeper, and how her personality traits influenced the gatekeeping process. She described how her own personality traits impacted her experiences, “Because I'm naturally an introverted person. I don't really speak up very much, so I often wondered would I be able to bring these concerns to somebody’s attention.” Maria reported that despite her natural introversion, she was able to address gatekeeping concerns with supervisees. She also discussed how supervisee disposition impacted her supervision experiences. When prompted to describe a critical incident involving gatekeeping the participant discussed a supervisee with a lack of openness, agreeableness, and self-awareness stating:

Her personality outside of that session, was also just laissez faire, just laid back. And she had already disclosed that she was already counseling as a licensed chemical dependency counselor and she didn't understand why we practice these roles. She would rather do it her way and I'm like, "This is why you're coming to the master's program to learn how to counsel where you won't do harm to others but you will be able to help others." So, just her attitude and her laissez faire demeanor was a big red flag for myself…. She was not being intentional and aware of how she was affecting the other person in the room.” (Maria, interview)

She reported that “supervisees who are timid or embarrassed to speak up for themselves or to ask for consultation can act as a barrier to gatekeeping” were also difficult to address (Maria,
interview). Maria stated that she believed a lack of openness, or agreeableness were the most challenging personality traits stating:

Supervisees who have a know-it-all attitude hinder a supervisee’s room to grow. And if they find themselves in remediation situation, they may not understand why this is limiting their ability to grow into a competent counseling professional. (Maria, interview)

Responsibility. Maria described several roles doctoral-level students play within the gatekeeping process within her program:

As a doctoral-level supervisor, the gatekeeping role is basically watching out and making sure that the supervisees that we supervising are practicing within the ethical codes, like for APA and CACREP within the university's policy, making sure they're aware of it so that way they understand the ramifications if they're not within the gatekeeping policy, and also keeping an eye out for anything that may stand out that may pull up like things that they're not doing or they're doing and you'd have a question about it. My role as the gatekeeper, sometimes it's direct as far as talking with the students about their behaviors. Other times it's talking to the professors and letting them know what I have observed (Maria, interview).

She described navigating and managing multiple roles as a burden. Maria described balancing these roles by stating the following:

You get into the doctoral program and you have all these multiple roles and you become a supervisor to the master's students, or the teaching assistant and you automatically have that gatekeeping role (Maria, interview).

Maria also described the lack of clarity or objectivity in assessing gatekeeping concerns as a burden. She stated that she was careful to not be “overly cautious, but cautious enough that we are not sending out counselors who may do harm to others.”

Support/Barriers. Maria described the faculty and program as generally supporting them during her experiences, “Faculty at my school are very supportive and will take the time to answer your questions and concerns.” (Maria, interview). She stated that she believed faculty acted appropriately whenever she brought up concerns. Maria described how during these
experiences her faculty “handled the situation” in a manner that felt supportive to the participant.

Maria discussed one communication one barrier created by faculty stating:

    I just wish this was done during class as some of us do not have time to drop by and have a conversation with the professors. Email is another form of communication, however, that has its limits as well (Maria, interview).

**Application of experience.** Maria described the ways her professional development was facilitated as a result of her experiences, describing how this improved her ability to identify and address supervisees who are exhibiting PPC:

    I learned that one, I'm able to speak up and let myself be heard as far as having concerns with others and their actions and behaviors that I do have within me the qualities needed in order to advocate for the clients themselves. (Maria, interview)

On a personal level, she stated that what she took away from these experience was confidence and ability to overcome her introversion “during that moment it was like it has to be done, I'm going to do it, forget all my insecurity, I'm going to, I need to report this”. She stated that as a result of these experiences she would recommend CES programs increase the visibility of the gatekeeper role:

    I think this experience has taught me to make others aware of what is the gatekeeping role, what does that entail, educating others on what we should be looking for, where to look for as far as the gatekeeping procedures, who to turn in our concerns to, just the little steps that we need to take in order to make sure that the counselors that we do send out to the workforce are competent enough to do no harm to others. So, for me as an educator, I want to instill in others as it was instilled in me to be aware of what gatekeeping really mean as a counselor, not only as a student, but as a counselor out in the field itself. (Maria, interview)

**The influence and intersection of identity.** The participant wrote about what impact her identity as a Hispanic female had upon her experiences stating:

    It’s more of a cultural and understanding of how your culture plays in gatekeeping because being Hispanic, I know you get the ... you're very respectful of the adult. Men have the machismo aspect going on for them and in Hispanic culture. And so, learning that and knowing how that affects you and trying to incorporate that with your gatekeeping, that I think is a very big aspect that helps you either raise those barriers or
recognize those barriers so you can consult with others or ... find a way to work around those barriers. I have not had the experience of supervising a male supervisee and I am unsure if this would affect my gatekeeping experience. I feel I am a strong enough supervisor to be able to set aside any identity issues I may have to be an effective supervisor. I do not see my identity being a barrier to being an effective supervisor. (Maria, interview).

She described how multicultural concerns and her identity played a role in gatekeeping during her second interview, stating:

This is an area that I take into consideration when assessing an incident. What I deem as concerning may be a cultural custom that I am not familiar with or have never encountered. This is one area that needs to be addressed during multicultural classes (Maria, interview).

Organized by thematic label, Table 7 provides additional participant data to support the above textural description for Maria.

Table 7

Data Summary Table: Participant Maria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
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| 1. Preparation  
  a. Clinical experience | “As a professional, unless you are a member of affiliations such as ACA or the Texas Counseling Association (TCA), you really are not exposed to the notion of gatekeeping. As a professional, learning about gatekeeping and keeping up with the rules and regulations, falls upon the professional and whether they keep abreast on the information or not is not monitored.”  
  “I often wondered if I had ran into a situation like this, would I be able to speak up? Would I say something?” |
| 2. Disposition  
  a. Gatekeeper  
  b. Supervisee | a. “Because I'm naturally an introverted person. I don't really speak up very much”  
b. “She was not motivated. I was taken aback at how far she came into the program because after the counseling process you go into practicum and you're with live clients.”  
b. “Disregard for the client and their issues. Only using practicum as a tool to utilize theories and techniques without any regards as to how these affect the client.” |
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<tr>
<td>2. Disposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Gatekeeper</td>
<td>1. “I was a teaching assistant for the counseling process and as they were role playing one of the students, it was their first role play, and one of the students started disclosing very detailed, very personal background information that involved child abuse, domestic abuse and suicidal ideation. And when asked if this was her own personal experience, or what she role played, she said that it was her own personal experience.”</td>
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<td>b. Supervisee</td>
<td>2. “If a supervisee believes they know everything and reason they can catch every situation that would be considered unethical or questionable, they put themselves in a situation where there is no room for improvement or learning. If they believe they are able to correct a situation without the help of others, they are likely to find out the hard way that consultation may be needed from time to time.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. “Supervisee who seek consultation and see opportunities to grow support the gatekeeping process. Supervisees who are willing to question their own intentions with the client and seek the opinions of others support the gatekeeping process.</td>
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|                        | • “Any situation where the supervisee began to show inappropriate feelings for the client  
• Callous disregard for confidentiality  
• Supervisees’ unwillingness to admit wrongdoing and continuing with same path.  
• Counter transference that is not kept in check  
• Behavior that is harming and cannot be better explained by a medical condition, current life events, or culture.”  |
<p>| 3. Responsibility      |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| a. Necessity           | 1. “The little steps that we need to take in order to make sure that the counselors that we do send out to the workforce are competent enough to do no harm to others. So for me as an educator, I want to instill in others as it was instilled in me to be aware of what gatekeeping really mean as a counselor, not only as a student, but as a counselor out in the field itself.”  |
| b. Burden              | 2. “That was the most impactful part for me is having a supervisor instill the gatekeeping role within me.”  |
| Support/Barriers       |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| a. Faculty             |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| b. Program             |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |</p>
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| 4. Support/Barriers  
  c. Faculty  
  d. Program | a. “I brought them to the attention of the professor who handled the situation.”  
  a. “I really, really liked the professors here at the university. One of the professors ended up being my supervisor for my license and she always gave us information as far as what gatekeeping was. In the supervision session, not during the master's program, but in my supervision for my license, she always gave us information and little advice as far as what is gatekeeping? And she always challenged us to come up with scenarios in order for us to be able to look not only within the program but out in the field with licensed counselors, what are we looking at? So, with my supervisor I think I got more the gatekeeper more instilled in me than just the regular master's program.”  
  a. “They are ... Sometimes they're clear cut and other times it's a varied line and having to follow the policies and procedures in order to make sure that we're not being overly cautious, but cautious enough that we are not sending out counselors who may do harm to others.” |
| 5. Application of Experience  
  a. Professional growth  
  b. Personal growth | a.. “I learned that one, I'm able to speak up and let myself be heard as far as having concerns with others and their actions and behaviors, that I do have within me the qualities needed in order to advocate for the clients themselves.” |
| Application of Experience  
  a. Professional growth  
  b. Personal growth | a. I often wondered would I be able to bring these concerns to some one's attention. And during that moment it was like it has to be done, I'm going to do it, forget all my insecurity, I'm going to, I need to report this.”  
  b. “I'd like to have a course on gatekeeping. That would be great. That would be the greatest thing, especially in the master's program. If not even a course within at least an assignment about gatekeeping or have two to three weeks just talking about the gatekeeping and gatekeeping procedures mandated training to go to any type of workshops about gatekeeping so that they can understand how important it is.” |
Table 7 (Cont.)

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<td>6. Influence and Intersection of Identity</td>
<td>“I have not had the experience of supervising a male supervisee and I am unsure if this would affect my gatekeeping experience. I feel I am a strong enough supervisor to be able to set aside any identity issues I may have to be an effective supervisor. I do not see my identity being a barrier to being an effective supervisor.”</td>
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Laura

Laura is an unlicensed current doctoral candidate in her third year at a CES doctoral program. She reported having supervised 20 master's students within her program over the course of one and a half years and reported that she is currently not supervising students within her program. Laura reported that she utilizes the following theories for supervision: humanistic psychotherapy model, Hogan’s developmental model, and the discrimination model. She reported that she utilizes person-centered theory for counseling. Laura reported that she was currently in the process of completing hours towards LPC licensure by providing school-based services. Laura reported having prior clinical experience through the clinical mental health (CMH) program. She reported that she gained clinical experience during her practicum and internship counseling courses while providing private practice services.

Preparation. Laura stated that she did not feel prepared for her experiences. For example, she stated “I don't think our program has done a good job of modeling how the gatekeeping process should work. I feel disappointed in my program for that.” (Laura, interview). She identified having a lack of awareness and availability of what the program gatekeeping policies and procedures were, “I don't even know if we have any…I have no idea what our policy is.” (Laura, interview). She described feeling frustrated as a result of what was done to prepare her for this role. She reported that she believed her understanding of what
gatekeeping is came through an experience stating: “It hasn't come from a standardized manual or procedure. Which now that I'm saying it out loud, it seems pretty concerning…” (Laura, interview) She did not identify prior clinical experience as beneficial or as a barrier in her experiences.

**Disposition.** Laura described the role her own disposition played in her experiences as important. She frequently discussed the challenges her personality traits created during her experiences. She described how her own personality traits, including empathy, made her evaluative role feel “incongruent with me, and that’s challenging”. She described one of her biggest challenges as anxiety, and a lack of confidence: “I think confidence. As a new supervisor... I look back to my first semester supervising, and I had no confidence.” (Laura, interview). She also described her openness, and agreeableness, as traits which helped her growth as a supervisee. She contrasted these traits with her supervisees who presented with PPCs stating:

Personality traits as barriers, defensiveness, withdrawn, reactive, unwillingness to be vulnerable or receive feedback, unwillingness to acknowledge “own stuff” – ugh. These supervisees are challenging, and I experience more countertransference and urgency because 16 weeks is not enough time it seems. It’s hard to work with someone that always has a guard up, that “listens to respond” but doesn’t “hear to learn” (Laura, interview).

**Responsibility.** The necessity of, and the burden of the gatekeeping role was described by Laura in the following way:

Ultimately, when I think about gatekeeping, I think about protecting current or future clients. A protection of the public. Through supervision or doing that through teaching, and trying to help future counselors, or counselors in training, meet appropriate standards as defined by CACREP or the ACA code of ethics, or what's kind of laid out in our program... The first and foremost thing that comes to me is the public. How can we try to ensure that they're getting the best care, and appropriate care? (Laura, interview).
Laura reported feeling conflicted balancing the necessity of gatekeeping with her “humanism” and empathy for supervisees. Despite this, she stated that she felt the pressure to adequately gatekeep supervisees due to potential for harm and her belief that gatekeeping might not occur post-graduation. She described this experience as: “there's more pressure, there's more urgency, and I feel like that conflicts with some of my beliefs” (Laura, interview).

Support/Barriers. Laura identified her program and faculty as “my biggest support, and my biggest barriers” (Laura, interview). She stated that she had received beneficial mentorship and support from her supervisor during her own supervision. Laura spoke and wrote in greater length regarding how faculty and the program acted as barriers. As illustrated by prior quotes, she felt unprepared for her experiences. She stated that she was frustrated by the lack of clear policies and procedures within her program. Laura described the gatekeeping processes within her program as opaque. She stated that when she brought issues to faculty “nothing was ever done that was visible to myself or other students.” (Laura, interview). Laura also stated that faculty failed to adequately model the gatekeeping role, stating “there was not a good model to follow for my future work as a counselor educator.” (Laura, interview). Laura, described the program culture, and faculty dynamics as follows:

There are different standards and objectives it seems amongst faculty and there’s no clear model or protocol until a significant problem occurs. Gatekeeping should be an ongoing process throughout students' education/program (Laura, interview).

Application of experience. She stated that despite gatekeeping being a challenge her experiences increased her appreciation for supervision and improved her understand of supervision.

In some of those hardest, most overwhelming situations, which I think just every semester I have more and more respect for supervision. I think there's an honoring of this process, and this individual time that we get with the students (Laura, interview).
Laura described that as a result of her supervision experiences, she increased her self-confidence:

How much more confident I am, how much more comfortable I am. Having that developmental piece where I feel like I had a better grasp of supervision in entirety as opposed to just kind this is what I can handle at this moment (Laura, interview).

The influence and intersection of identity. Laura stated she called upon her identity as a member of the LGBTQ+ community to model challenging conversations with supervisees and in what ways it impacted her evaluative role. When prompted to describe how her identity and multicultural concerns, and her identity influenced her experiences, she wrote the following:

Awareness, willingness to learn/grow in competencies, value and honoring those different than ourselves. These are areas I consider when evaluating and working with my supervisees. My identity and intersectionality have not come up in supervision other than modeling what conversations can look like with diverse clients for my supervisees (Laura, interview).

Organized by thematic label, Table 8 provides additional participant data to support the above textural description for Laura.

Table 8

Data Summary Table: Laura

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<td>1. Preparation</td>
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</table>
| a. Clinical experience      | "The question on the survey where it was like, "Can you provide your program's documentation for gatekeeping?" I was like, "No, I don't even know if we have any." As far as that goes, I'm like, "Yeah, I have no idea what our policy is."

"So, most of my knowledge and experience with that has come through my supervision of supervision. It hasn't come from a standardized manual or procedure. Which now that I'm saying it out loud, it seems pretty concerning."

"As a new supervisor you're like, "Wait, what? How am I supposed to make all that happen?" And so, my first semester I couldn't really wrap my head around the IDM. That was really the only developmental model that was taught and suggested. ...And I think that really hindered my understanding and ability to gatekeep at that time." |

Table 8
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Clinical experience</td>
<td>“I don't think our program has done a good job of modeling how the gatekeeping process should work. I feel disappointed in my program for that, for some of those reasons. That I feel like gatekeeping should have taken place and it didn't... I don't feel they modeled that well. I don't have a model, I don't have procedures, I don't have access to a lot of that stuff. And I don't feel like it was modeled well.”</td>
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<td>2. Disposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Gatekeeper</td>
<td>a. “I think confidence. As a new supervisor... I look back to my first semester supervising, and I had no confidence.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Supervisee</td>
<td>a. “I think my humanism. I align very heavily with humanistic beliefs, and that can be hard when it comes to gatekeeping. Because there's this belief that given enough time, and given the right environment, that individuals will grow, and self-actualize and figure it out essentially. And so, it feels hard at times”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. “Isn't it all gatekeeping? I feel like the majority of mine has been when supervisees feel like they're not holding a good space, due to personal issues, or some stuff that's coming up for them.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. “Supports: Openness, vulnerability, willingness to learn and grow, insight/awareness – easier to have hard conversations and more likely to implement feedback; more positive outcomes.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Necessity</td>
<td>a. “My perception of gatekeeping obviously that it's a really essential part of being a counselor educator.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Burden</td>
<td>a. “I just really like the supervision process. I like challenging students. I like challenging their beliefs about the counseling process, helping them delve into theory. I like watching these students grow. I love those aha moments when they get it. And I feel so proud when students get there.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Necessity</td>
<td>b. <em>She didn't think it was pertinent, she didn't see the value in it, but she was getting good grades and there were no red flags in other places. And so, the faculty didn't really get involved. Whenever I think about my supervisees, that's the one that was a disappointment. The one that I feel like didn't progress or didn't move forward how I was hoping she would, but she also dropped out our program. I feel like she gatekept herself.</em>”</td>
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<td>d. Burden</td>
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<td>4. Support/Barriers</td>
<td>a. “Supports, I would say definitely my own supervision. *My supervision of supervision. Having a supervisor that's encouraged my exploration of supervision models. My supervisor also utilizes a similar process model. So, discrimination model. There were times that my supervisor was a teacher, they were a counselor, they were a consultant. That really helped me, I think, process, these are my fears, like some of the personalization stuff that can be overlooked at times. How am I impacted? What does it feel like to give hard feedback to a supervisee? What are your fears about gatekeeping? What's it like to yes, set those boundaries, that kind of stuff, and exploring what was coming up for me at times. It felt like it really modeled the supervision that I could then take him in the room with supervisees, and kind of having that model was really probably the biggest thing.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Faculty</td>
<td>b. “Yeah. Can my biggest support and my biggest barrier be the same thing, and be my program? Where it's just I don't feel they modeled that well. I don't have a model.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Program</td>
<td>b. <em>Not well. My frustrations and concerns with gatekeeping (peers) took place in mentoring and discussions with faculty for my own learning purposes. Gatekeeping (supervisees) had more support with supervision and faculty. Faculty are open to discussing their views and the importance of gatekeeping; however, there was not a good model to follow for my future work as a counselor educator.</em>”</td>
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<td>4. Support/Barriers</td>
<td><strong>a.</strong> “Concerns with peers: supported my frustration and discussion of my concerns; however, nothing was ever done that was visible to myself or other students. For example, in a doctoral, advanced practicum/internship course, a doctoral-level student/peer showed videos where she lacked awareness and demonstrated no therapeutic counseling skills. She did, in her final video, reflect a feeling. Singular. She reflected one feeling during the clip and the instructor and my peers celebrated her, praised her, etc. I was excited that she showed growth; however, this individual is getting a degree in which she will be TEACHING counseling students skills, theory, etc. Remediation and gatekeeping were obvious to every student that was appropriate for the course, yet nothing seemed to take place...unless it was behind closed doors that students are not aware of.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Faculty</td>
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<td>b. Program</td>
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<td>5. Application of Experience</td>
<td><strong>a.</strong> “I remember thinking sitting in my practicum class and hearing how much supervision we had to do. One hour with your doc student, one hour with your site supervisor, two and a half to three hours of group sup in the class itself. And I remember thinking like, wow, that's a lot of wasted time. I thought supervision was going to be a waste of time. It was a box that I was going to have to check off. Because I naively thought I was going to get better at counseling by just counseling more. That's five hours a week I could be seeing five more clients, and that's clearly what's going to help me be a better clinician. And then it was the third week of practicum supervision, I was like, &quot;oh this is where I'm going to learn. This is where I'm going to be challenged. This is where I'm going to learn how to conceptualize, to put theory into practice&quot;. Like this is where the learning takes place. From that moment on,”</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Professional growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Personal growth</td>
<td><strong>b.</strong> “There are times when I'm reflective and I'm like, I'm not even the same person I was 3 three years ago, and how exciting that is.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Influence and Intersection of Identity</td>
<td>“Awareness, willingness to learn/grow in competencies, value and honoring those different than ourselves. These are areas I consider when evaluating and working with my supervisees. My identity and intersectionality have not come up in supervision other than modeling what conversations can look like with diverse clients for my supervisees.”</td>
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Claire

Claire is an unlicensed current doctoral candidate in her fourth year at a CES doctoral program. She reported that she has supervised 24 master's students within her program over the course of three years. She is currently supervising three students at her program. Claire reported that she utilizes the discrimination model for supervision. She reported that she utilizes Gestalt and person-centered theories for counseling. Claire reported that prior to beginning the doctoral program she gained clinical experience providing counseling services for approximately six months at a counseling clinic.

**Preparation.** Claire stated she was aware of her program’s gatekeeping policies and procedures. She described the preparation of her program as follows:

> I was pretty aware. Because, we covered that in the supervision class. Other classes as well, we had talked, talk about that. So, I was pretty aware that if things were not going a certain type of way, then you had that awareness that there were steps to take in terms of intervening making sure that there was a chain of command that was followed. (Claire, interview).

She stated that although “I had some sense of where to go, what to do having been in situations where, um, more experienced people had shared, um, what it was like for them” they still felt significant confusion (Claire, interview). Claire believed that she did not have enough knowledge about supervision models and felt confusion as to which supervision model to align with.

> It was kind of brand new that was the first time experiencing the theoretical side of things. I didn't know the discrimination model. I feel like we kind of started it in supervision class. You know, we were exposed to all the different ones and, stuff like that. I kind of tried just seeing myself or kind of tried out the other ones but it just didn't fit. But discrimination it works so well just for so many different things, just perfect and, you know, when you’re kind of utilizing all these different roles. You know, it just helps. (Claire, interview).

**Disposition.** Claire described herself as “direct” and “approachable”. She described her personality traits as beneficial during her experiences. Claire believed that her personality gave her an ability to provide challenging feedback and address multicultural concerns. She also
identified how a supervisee’s disposition was impactful. Claire identified a “lack of awareness” as one of the primary concerns which initiates gatekeeping and openness as personality traits which supports gatekeeping. She described how supervisees’ personality traits impacted the gatekeeping process as follows:

I have observed that supervisees who are open to gatekeeping processes tend to learn more and grow exponentially. Individuals that are closed off to the process tend to exhibit the opposite outcome (Claire, interview).

**Responsibility.** Claire described her role within the gatekeeping process as a liaison, describing her role is “that go-between person”. She described her role as a necessity, but also described ways in which the role felt like burden to her. She appeared to struggle with the lack of authority and power as non-faculty stating, “there is not really too much that you can do. The scope is kind of limited in terms of what you can do as a doc supervisor” (Claire, interview). She also described feeling “guilt” about having to provide evaluations, or assessments which were used to remediate or gatekeep supervisees. Claire described the emotional burden of gatekeeping during one challenging supervision experience:

I talk about one experience, but I probably had a couple. I think what was hard for me, I guess maybe in one instance was actually seeing…I guess… how kind of played out with a particular supervisee. I guess the way it ended. At first, I had some kind of guilt around it. Because, yeah, it was kind of brand new. Like, that was the first time I actually experienced the theoretical side of things. So, when things kind of happened the way it did, I felt maybe bad at first. Just kind of thinking, “oh my gosh, like, I actually maybe I'm contributing to maybe ending somebody's potential career”. I think it was just like some guilt and, that kind of bad feeling around thinking that “I'm contributing…to someone not finishing their program…after the fact and receiving supervision around it. I kind of resolved that, and [I] understood that that wasn't my fault. I didn't do that, it was part of that process, and if I didn't do that potentially someone could have gone out and hurt clients. Just because they didn't know what they were doing. So, I think that was my biggest, biggest hardship… Some guilt around gatekeeping (Claire, interview).
**Support/Barriers.** Claire described faculty as supporting her during her experiences in generally positive terms. For example, she stated: “The faculty members I have worked with have been supportive with regards to gatekeeping concerns” (Claire, interview). She stated that when she brought supervisee concerns to her faculty she “felt heard” and that faculty “paid attention” (Claire, interview). Claire believed her faculty supported her by discussing her gatekeeping experiences and provided a “good sense of what people have experienced” giving them “a sense of where to go” when put in gatekeeping situations (Claire, interview). However, she did identify that her position within the program, and relationship with faculty was also a barrier, stating:

> In the role of a doc student is not really too much that you can really do beyond, maybe addressing things when you see them and then communicating that to someone else…relay that information on to the next person above them, um, so to speak. But it doesn't always necessarily mean that something is going to change, especially at a certain stage. The fact that there is not really too much that you can do. The scope is kind of limited in terms of what you can do as a doc supervisor (Claire, interview).

**Application of experience.** Claire reported that her experiences facilitated growth. She believed her gatekeeping experiences improved her insight and self-awareness “I learned about myself…I could be confrontational” (Claire, interview). She identified that her experiences facilitated profession growth as well. She stated that her experiences illustrated professional growth stating that her experiences allowed her “to acknowledge the importance of growth and not just, like, ‘oh, I need to be perfect’” (Claire, interview). Claire continued by stating her experiences:

> Impacted my views... I would say all around it has been a positive thing. I've acknowledged the hard parts of it, and just the necessity of the hard parts. But overall, it, it's been a positive experience for me… Just to see how much growth I've had within my own process (Claire, interview).
The influence and intersection of identity. Claire made many statements regarding the influence her identity had on supervisees, the process of supervision, and gatekeeping. She also described how the identities of supervisees was important. Claire labeled identity as a “crucial” part of the gatekeeping experience. She stated that she would like to increase the emphasis on developing multicultural competencies in CES programs as a result of her experiences:

Multicultural concerns are crucial parts of gatekeeping. It is unfortunate that multicultural education is not prioritized in counseling programs as it should be, as evidenced by the fact that there is only one course in master's Counseling programs nationally that is dedicated to multiculturalism. As a result, multicultural deficiencies are often times evident in interns’ work which makes gatekeeping a necessity to prevent harm to clients. Reinforcing the importance and need for being aware of multicultural concerns is an important aspect of my doctoral supervision work (Claire, interview).

Claire did not believe that her identity as a woman was significant. Her identity as a person of color appeared to be more significant. Claire reported that she addressed her ethnicity frequently with supervisees, and attempted to do so early in the supervision process. She described what pattern this typically took in the following:

My sex or orientation has never been issues that affect my gatekeeping experiences in any overt ways that I am aware of. With regards to ethnicity, I usually address that in the initial or at least second supervision meeting and check in with supervisees as our alliance builds. This is necessary as I am most often ethnically different from the majority of individuals that I have supervised (Claire, interview).

She stated that being a woman of color impacted her relationships with supervisees as well as the supervision process. In particular, when supervisees were struggling with multicultural competence:

It was just discomfort around working with, clients of color. Then not being able to report that when there were difficulties potentially to maybe protect me. Or, I don't know what that was. Or maybe not to offend me probably. Because they were having difficult experiences with people of color and then you reported that to a person of color. (Claire, interview).
Organized by thematic label, Table 9 provides additional participant data to support the above textural description for Claire.

Table 9

**Data Summary Table: Participant Claire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
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| 1. Preparation  | **a. Clinical experience**
|                 | “The gatekeeping role was formally introduced to me in the Foundations of Counselor Education class where we had very insightful research-based discussions, and also got to learn from the myriad of experiences the professor shared. The gatekeeping role was further reinforced in the Supervision of Counselors class, as we not only got the theory of it, but learned how to actively put into action.” |
| 2. Disposition  | **a. Gatekeeper**
|                 | “I consider myself, like, a direct person. I don't consider myself to be mean, I've never been told by any of my supervisees that I've been mean either, so and that's a good thing. So, I'm direct but at the same time I'm approachable, and I make sure that when I see something I kind of start to, address it from the get go. So, it becomes a consistent thing of them knowing where they are. So, I've never created the sense of, oh, everything's great, you know, you're doing well, whatever, and then, um, you know at some point down the road, you know, they're told something totally different. You know, so, whatever I see, whatever, um, I become aware of I communicate that to them. This is really very direct, like, I would say maybe nicely so that they don't see you, you know, like, threatened or feel incompetent because I think that's the worst feeling is that feeling of incompetence. Especially, as communicated in kind of like a harsh way. So, I think the way my personality I'm probably more of a cooler in person, so being able to communicate what I'm observing to them even if it's not easy to do that, I try to find, the best way for them to know what is happening. As I observe those things, I encourage that.” |
|                 | **b. Supervisee**
<p>|                 | “it's really nothing like you've done, it's just, like, I don't know, just, like, personalities just did not align or something, you know, that's a thing. And that, and that happens. I think in the real world too because I think people meet people all the time and you just decide, nah, I really don't care for that person too much or whatever, you know. Um, you know, type of thing, so I-it does happen, um, in, in supervision and it does essentially affect, um, gatekeeping as well.” |</p>
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<th>Themes</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Disposition</td>
<td>b. “Supervisees who exhibit traits such as warmth, genuineness, openness, authenticity etc., tend to demonstrate growth and overall gain more from the gatekeeping process. Those that are closed off and guarded tend to have a more difficult time benefiting from gatekeeping measures put in place to assist their growth.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Gatekeeper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Supervisee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Responsibility</td>
<td>a. “Gatekeeping is such necessary”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Necessity</td>
<td>a. “For me gatekeeping is being that go-between person. Especially in the context of supervision.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Burden</td>
<td>a. “… Help people to get to a place of, you know, safety, and just being able to know that you can bring stuff to the room. So, when it comes down to maybe me having to gatekeep around things, then it doesn’t get immensely difficult.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support/Barriers</td>
<td>a. “The faculty members I have worked with have been supportive with regards to gatekeeping concerns. I have been supervised by faculty who listen intently, and also trust my judgement when I present gatekeeping concerns. This is usually backed up by documentation of tapes and notes over a period of time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Faculty</td>
<td>a. “The faculty members I have worked with have also been helpful in providing guidance as it relates to assisting students with working through their growth edges. Fortunately, I have not had the experience of working with a faculty member who acted as a barrier to gatekeeping.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Program</td>
<td>b. “After several attempts of trying to work with the student through the lens of my chosen supervision model and providing consistent and direct feedback to tapes shown, there was very minimal improvement. This information was also consistently communicated to my faculty supervisor who essentially made the decision to talk with the internship coordinator, about what was the best decision for this student who had theoretical knowledge of the counseling process, but could not apply theory to practice and definitely was not ready to be a counselor.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Application of Experience</td>
<td>a. I learned about myself, I could be confrontational and not, like, you know, negative confrontational because I’ve always had a fear of, like, you know, confronting just the way that sounds you to confront people about things.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Professional growth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Personal growth</td>
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<td>Themes</td>
<td>Statement</td>
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| 6.Influence and Intersection of Identity | “I'm pretty direct with stuff... I'm gonna address it at some point... Because sometimes I think we don't pay attention to differences. Especially for me, like, I'm in such a unique position at a predominantly white school. So often times, probably 99% of the time I don't supervise people that look like me or I don't have those interactions. At first it was nerve racking because I just didn’t know what that would be like. What that interaction would be like, but so far I can say I've not had too many occasions where that has been a thing. So, I think that’s a good thing, because I address it right off the bat. I don't leave that to be an elephant in the room type of situation. So, we’re gonna talk about that, and what are your feelings or your thoughts around it? And what are your experiences? Most times it's people, like, you know, “I'm fine with it”, but a few people will say “oh I've never really worked with, you know, a person of color or a black person”. Whatever, I'm fine with it. I've probably had only one occasion where that turned out to be, maybe not the truth. But it, it wasn’t a bad, bad thing, it didn't turn out to be a bad thing. It was just discomfort around working with, clients of color. Then not being able to report that when there were difficulties potentially to maybe protect me.... Or, I don't know what that was. Or maybe not to offend me probably. Because they were having difficult experiences with people of color and then you report that to a person of color... I think I maybe kind of understand that. I don’t know, they didn't know how that would be. Or how that would, how I would address that. But it did work out pretty well though. Like, when that actually and I came into the room and I, you know, decided to address it, it worked out pretty well. I think that was just, like, a really big learning experience.  
...So, yeah, those factors, those extraneous factors really come into play and it's just about timing and kind of addressing things in a timely manner.”  |

**Paul**

Paul is a licensed doctoral-level student in his third year at a CES doctoral program. He reported he has supervised 19 master's students within his program over the course of four semesters. He reported that he is currently supervising 10 students. Paul reported that he utilizes the discrimination model to facilitate supervision sessions and utilizes the life-span development model to conceptualize her supervisee’s development. He reported that he utilizes Adlerian and
family systems theories for counseling. Paul reported that prior to beginning the doctoral program he had worked as licensed professional counselor for two and a half years.

**Preparation.** Paul reported that his program introduced him to gatekeeping during his supervision course. He was unaware of gatekeeping prior to the program, stating, “I didn’t even know that was a thing”. He stated that the “class really did open my eyes to the importance of this role”. Paul felt that his courses did not fully prepare him for his experiences, he stated “I don’t feel super knowledgeable” regarding gatekeeping. Paul described how that this impacted him, “I think some of this was me not knowing 100% what to expect even though I did read the text and then seeing that and being faced with it in the moment”. Paul identified having prior clinical experience and experience as a supervisor. Despite this, he reported that he felt underprepared:

“I think some of it is experience. I think there's this idea that I don’t have enough experience to know, to even develop an identity as a gatekeeper. I was just understanding what it meant to be a supervisor, even though that's part of being supervisor, gatekeeping.” (Paul, interview).

Paul summarized what was done by his program in order to prepare him and the experience of gaining competency, stating:

I think the only thing I really, I got here was the supervision class. I don’t say that to diminish, but I think there's this clear difference between having to experience it. I think even as an early counselor you can read a book all day, but you get in and do it, it feels very different. I think that was what supervision was for me. So, a lot of it was just learning how I'm in the room and what model do I want to use. Less about the gatekeeping process. I knew it was important, I knew the importance was really stressed. (Paul, interview).

**Disposition.** Paul discussed in which ways his disposition and personality were influenced by his experience. He stated that his experiences had helped him develop an increased awareness of his disposition and personality, “I am learning really a lot about my own insecurities as a person”. He identified what internal personality traits he believed were
beneficial during his experiences as openness, conscientiousness, and receptivity to feedback. Paul also identified being able to provide encouragement as important: “The ability to encourage and point out strengths comes pretty easily for me, that's just who I am”. He described how being empathic made giving critical feedback challenging, “[t]he most challenging part was to give more constructive criticism feedback. [T]he idea [being] not wanting to harm or hurt someone's feelings, I mean, you know, you have to do it because it's for their growth”.

Paul stated that personality traits were often one of the primary concerns which led to gatekeeping and how personality traits limited the effect of feedback and supervisee development. Paul wrote the following when describing a critical gatekeeping experience:

While supervising, a difficult area to manage has been disposition. In several cases, a supervisee is experiencing personal difficulties that are negatively impacting the supervision process. The most common concern is a supervisee’s ability to receive feedback. So, based on a poor disposition and lack of openness to new learning the supervision process slows down and grow, for the supervisee does not readily occur. Through difficult, growth-oriented conversations a supervisee can learn to receive constructive feedback. From my personal experience, I have seen this process play out and through remediation the supervisee has shown growth and the supervisor-supervisee relationship is productive (Paul, critical incident).

**Responsibility.** Paul said the necessity and importance of gatekeeping was demonstrated in his current program. He believed that his supervision course helped demonstrate the necessity of gatekeeping, in addition to his past clinical experience. He described balancing the importance of maintaining his gatekeeping roles and responsibilities with his empathic counselor identity as a challenge:

During the midst of it, I felt pretty stressed. I felt for them and kind of their anxieties, you know I felt bad, now they're so nervous. I was like no this is about your growth but as their sitting there anxious they’re not hearing that….Feeling this burden of wanting to maybe rescue them because I know they're hurting but also knowing that I need to be held standard that says this isn't okay. So, really tough to balance (Paul, interview).

In addition, he described the burden of developing confidence, competence, and adjusting to a new role as follows:
I'm supposed to be the person who knows but, my newness. And even just some of my own personal background, questioning myself impostor syndrome feeling. So, a lot of rumination...You start to feel competent you start to feel just as counselor, professional, you know fully licensed, and some sense of confidence. And then I put myself in a new situation and it feels like I've regressed (Paul, interview).

**Support/Barriers.** Paul describes his program faculty as generally being supportive during his experiences “in supervision class, faculty was supportive in regard to gatekeeping” (Paul, interview). He described faculty as available, he believed they provided useful suggestions, addressed his concerns, and worked collaboratively with him. He described the collaboration with faculty when he was addressing supervisees exhibiting a PPC:

I'm going to go get the faculty whose teaching the class, and I am going to say “here’s what's going on” and who I was kind of I was going lean that professor in that way and say “this is a little bit more than I know how to do”….luckily they are very supportive, and I am like “I don’t know!” (Paul, interview).

Paul described time as a significant barrier his experience. He believed his supervision experience at his current institution was limited by the amount of time he had to devote to supervising but did not identify this a barrier related to faculty or the program.

**Application of Experience.** Paul believed his professional identity had been greatly impacted as a result of his experiences, “I'm realizing how complex being a counselor educator is. I really did not have a lot of understanding of that coming into the program.” (Paul interview). As result of his gatekeeping experience he had changed his approach to supervision “I had to kind of shift, to not using the counselor rule as often through the discrimination model” (Paul, interview). Paul also described his personal growth by stating, “I’ve grown as a person” (Paul, interview). As a result of these experiences, he stated that he would like to increase the visibility of gatekeeping and incorporate discussions about gatekeeping throughout coursework.
**Influence and Intersection of Identity.** Paul did not discuss how his ethnicity impacted his experiences. However, he did believe attending to multicultural concerns in supervision was important and described how this. Paul stated that it is necessary to address the influence that sex, ethnicity, and sexual orientation have in shaping the experience of supervisees and his clients. He described how an awareness of his privilege informs his supervision practices.

Organized by thematic label, Table 10 provides additional participant data to support the above textural description for Paul.

**Table 10**

*Data Summary Table: Paul*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation</td>
<td>“I believe I was introduced to gatekeeping but was not fully prepared for an actual gatekeeping in the field. Based on experience of a clinical faculty member I was not prepared with process and stress related to the gatekeeping role.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Clinical experience</td>
<td>a. “More the things I have learned now is because of other experiences of another institution where I have had to actually walk someone through that process and forced to have a greater understanding of it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disposition</td>
<td>a. “I have a willingness to be open and do learning and take correction. Those are things I think are positive about who I am, and I kind of bringing those things to the table. I’m willing to continue to learn and grow I think that’s going to make me more effective long term. The ability to encourage and point out strengths comes pretty easily for me that’s just who I am, that comes from my theory background that’s kind of I tend to be more strengths based, or strength minded, or growth minded…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Gatekeeper</td>
<td>a. “Supervisees that are open to new learning and are able to receive feedback were more successful during the gatekeeping process. In addition, supervisees with a growth mindset were more positive during a difficult process.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Supervisee</td>
<td>b. “Supervisees that are not successful during the gatekeeping process are defensive and tend to not take responsibility for own actions. In addition, supervisees that take feedback as a personal attack tend to focus on others rather than the opportunity to grow the self.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Responsibility</td>
<td><strong>a.</strong> “I’ve gotten to see how that plays out and how important it really is, because I’m watching video on how that countertransference or whatever it is impacting the client and it's not effective. So, we need to do something about it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Necessity</td>
<td><strong>b.</strong> “Feeling this burden of wanting to maybe rescue them because I know they're hurting but also knowing that I need to be held standard that says this isn’t okay. So really tough to balance”</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Burden</td>
<td><strong>b.</strong> “I think my perception is really just based on. It's this kind of necessary thing that has to be done for the integrity of the field for the protection of future clients and client welfare and even for the training of the intern if it's not suitable for them we're not serving them well. So, when I think of gatekeeping. I also think of it as a very difficult process instead of reading the idea of gateslipping letting someone through because it professors are admitting this anonymously because it's just so difficult am okay with this person go. And this is articles that I read, there's a term out there “gateslipping” so that was kind of surprising, but going through so of my own stuff I realize how much internal stuff is going on how stressful it is so, just yeah, it's just a difficult process.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support/Barriers</td>
<td><strong>a.</strong> “I'm going to go get the faculty whose teaching the class, and I am going to say “here’s what's going on” and who I was kind of I was going lean that professor in that way and say “this is a little bit more than I know how to do”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Faculty</td>
<td><strong>b.</strong> “The things I have learned now is because of other experiences of another institution where I have had to actually walk someone through that process and forced to have a greater understanding of it.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Program</td>
<td><strong>b.</strong> “Oh yeah, (gatekeeping) definitely feels definitely the community setting.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Application of Experience</td>
<td><strong>a.</strong> “I would say, and I had to kind of shift, to not using the counselor rule as often through the discrimination mode”</td>
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<td>a. Professional growth</td>
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<td>b. Personal growth</td>
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<td>6. Influence and Intersection</td>
<td>“Multicultural concerns relate to gatekeeping because counselors in training would have to culturally competent and aware of any biases that might influence their counseling work. If a counselor in training is displaying personal issues or concerns related to multicultural competence they need to be remediated.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Identity</td>
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Megan is an unlicensed current doctoral-level student in her second year at a CES doctoral program. She reported she has supervised 11 master's students within her program over the course of six months and is currently supervising six students. Megan reported that she utilizes the discrimination model for supervision and the IDM in order to determine the current level of her supervisees. She reported that she utilizes emotionally focused therapy (EFT) for counseling. Megan reported that prior to beginning the doctoral program she gained clinical experience during her clinical mental health CMH program completing her required clinical hours in a private practice setting.

**Preparation.** Megan reported that she believes the preparation by her program was insufficient. She described her experience as “just kind of learning as I went”. She stated that she was not fully aware of the policies and procedures used by her program, despite graduating as a master’s student from the same program:

The gatekeeping role was first introduced in the Foundations of Counselor Education course as we explored the multifaceted role of a counselor educator. Gatekeeper was presented alongside the other roles of counselor, researcher, teacher, supervisor, etc. (Megan, interview)

It is was like non-existent upon entering the program. Even being a master's student here a lot of uncertainty around it. I thought would be clearer at the doctoral. We briefly touched on it in the Foundations of Counselor Education course, just loosely what gatekeeping looks like. It was covered more thoroughly in supervision. Ways that it would be handled, specific processes that we have place here (Megan, interview).

In general, Megan described struggling with her evaluative role. She stated she would have liked more clarity and objectivity in order to prepare herself to be part of the gatekeeping process within her program. She described the ambiguity around gatekeeping within her program as follows:

I think there is a lot of ambiguity around it. I feel like it's more like we're not given like a lot of clarity around the idea of gatekeeping and what it looks like. It's talked about conceptually and obviously it's really important as a way to protect quality of mental
health care being offered in the field. It's something that's so vital and it's kind of frustrating to have this lack of clarity around something that I see being so essential (Megan, interview).

Disposition. Megan reported that as result of her disposition and personality she would have liked more clarity and objectivity about her evaluative role as a doctoral-level supervisor.

Regarding this she stated:

Again, I think this is interpersonally of like, or intrapersonal of “Is this enough to be considered an issue?” The lack of like objectivity in it, and like, that comment about that client, or the way they are not able to consider what a multicultural client minority might feel like? How do I measure that in a way where I can gauge if that's truly concerning and not just a result of them expanding their world view, but is a concern? It's just so much is so relative and subjective. You have to take into account their developmental level, just the lack of clarity there is challenging. Making a decision, when I don't have “here's why XYZ” or like “I felt this way, or there appeared to be a lack of empathy here” that’s what's makes it more challenging for me (Megan, interview).

She described “receptivity to feedback”, “defensiveness”, and “reactivity in session with clients” as three of the primary concerns which were most likely to initiate gatekeeping processes. Megan described how supervisee personality traits, and dispositions were relevant to her experiences within the following statements:

A supervisee demonstrated a great deal of hostility and defensiveness when receiving feedback on a final evaluation in the context of supervision. Despite my efforts to use immediacy and create a safe space according to the counselor role of the discrimination model, I still had a great deal of difficulty communicating with this student regarding their development as a counselor.

I haven't had any supervisees where it's reached the level where like remediation was necessary. I have had experiences particularly with how receptive the supervisees are to feedback. They can get pretty defensive in most places. Even to the point of attacking me as a supervisor... Obviously that raises a lot of concerns about feedback that they may get from clients, or supervisors in the field. So, in an attempt to address those sometimes it's gone really well as I explained how this pertains to the profession, and other times it's really blown up in my face. As I try to explain or articulate how it's relevant.

I found times often when it felt more like gatekeeping it was around something they were just totally oblivious to. So, it required a lot more directness than I'm typically comfortable giving within the context of supervision. I have a hard time maybe telling people how they are perceived when I can only obviously speak to my experience. It's so
subjective, a lot of the things that we're gauging on are so subjective and relative, and non-quantifiable. It really is difficult to capture an element of their personality and give that back to them in a way that feels good. Those pieces are just personally difficult to me, maybe that I am not very directive, and when confronting I like to have something concrete, too. Rather than just my perception or experience. Another piece of that was kind of the characteristics of the supervisee. Just the defensiveness that’s there, and a lack of awareness of how they’re perceived, is a big one. Just pretty oblivious to how they can come across whether that’s disrespectful or judgmental. It seems like with a surprise that can be there, this is not feedback that they've heard before, which can be surprising because it seems so obvious and blatant at times. (Megan, interview).

**Responsibility.** Megan described gatekeeping as “so essential” and described how she struggled to find clarity. She described struggling to balance her evaluative role with other her responsibilities as significant burden. She described the burden she felt navigating this role:

I think it is clarifying of why even though supervision can be a safe place, there is a limit to that safety. And that’s okay, it is a different type of relationship than a counseling relationship. There's an evaluative piece to it, there's a piece where it's like I can't let you continue and that's not safe. Like that idea of evaluation, and what can be perceived as kind of putting a wall up, does not feel safe and because of that I should have different expectations for the level of depth that supervisees are willing to go to because it's different (Megan, interview).

Megan described that these experiences required more “directness than I’m typically comfortable with”. Determining what constituted actual gatekeeping concerns was described as a burden:

…..is this going to be an issue in the future” and “how can we mitigate the impact that have later on” So hopefully those things can be addressed at an earlier time and it's not during internship (Megan, interview).

**Support/Barriers.** She described faculty support through supervision as “pivotal” and generally described her program support favorably. Megan stated that her faculty was available to help her navigate her roles and responsibilities, stating:

I could call my supervisor after. Like especially this one I said blew up in my face, trying to employ something helpful [through] confrontation. When it didn't go well, I was able to call my supervisor and get immediate feedback of what are some things I should follow up with any follow-up emails to the student or to other faculty, or anyone who might need to be in the loop. The level of support there was pivotal just so that it wasn't just me making decisions (Megan, interview).
Megan described a lack of clarity as a program barrier. In addition, when asked to describe how prepared she felt for gatekeeping, she said the following:

I do not feel very well-prepared for my role as a gatekeeper. However, it seems to be a role that is so case-by-case that it would be difficult to feel prepared for all circumstances (Megan, interview).

**Application of Experience.** Megan reported increasing her professional and personal confidence, and ability to be assertive as result of her experiences. She believed that her experiences had illustrated the need for gatekeeping and deepened her commitment to it:

If I know something is going to be helpful to a client, something is going to be kind of neutral, or something’s going to be harmful to them. And kind of the red alert around what’s going harmful, like I am able to identify even if I haven't been doing this for 50 years. That has helped build a lot of confidence and deepened in my conviction of I need to say something when it is clear, and obvious (Megan, interview).

As result of her experiences, she recommended that CES programs make her gatekeeping preparation more explicit and make the role more visible, stating:

I would like to recommend like a supervision seminar. Like a week or two held before a supervision class, just you know, even if it is like three hours of like “here's essentials of what you need to know” I think that could really helpful long term in the process of just getting supervisors on the same page before they ever even sit down with the supervisee (Megan, interview).

**Influence and Intersection of Identity.** Megan identified multicultural concerns as “a significant aspect to gatekeeping”. She identified multicultural competence as one of the primary concerns leading to gatekeeping and reported that addressing multicultural competence as one of her biggest challenges in providing feedback to supervisees:

Most challenging... I feel like I sound like a broken record here... But it really is finding out what examples do I want to give to you to demonstrate this. Because I don't want to just tell you that you're not being multiculturally responsive (Megan, interview).

She described several ways she addressed multicultural competency and helped supervisees develop necessary skills. She aims to model an “awareness” of her “limited perspective” to her
supervisees. She reported that she uses her status as a female to help develop empathy to feel a “sense of oppression from a dominant culture.” Megan stated that attending to these concerns was important because:

Because white communities tend to be more active within mental health communities, there is a high degree of white privilege surrounding the field that often is not directly in the awareness of students/supervisees (Megan, interview).

Organized by thematic label, Table 11 provides additional participant data to support the above textural description for Megan.

Table 11

Data Summary Table: Megan

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<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation</td>
<td>“I do not feel very well-prepared for my role as a gatekeeper.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Clinical experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disposition</td>
<td>“I like to lead people to an awareness. I don’t like to just tell them, but I like to kind of foster their own awareness.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Gatekeeper</td>
<td>“Traits that influence the gatekeeping process primarily center on openness to other perspectives, receptivity to feedback, and tendency toward confrontation to influence the process. Supervisees who display humility, capacity for self-regulation, and willingness toward self-reflection have more positive outcomes. Supervisees who are defensive and hostile typically struggle more with the gatekeeping measures taken”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Supervisee</td>
<td>“It required a lot more directness than I’m typically comfortable giving within the context of supervision. I like to have something concrete too. Rather than just my perception or experience.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Responsibility</td>
<td>“In my personal experience, faculty members have acted as supports, hearing my concerns, validating those concerns, and exploring options in moving forward”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Necessity</td>
<td>“I feel like there is a great deal of variability in the ways that gatekeeping occurs at large in the counselor education community. Situations that would never be permitted at my institution are permitted at others, seemingly because it is such a hassle to address.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Burden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support/Barriers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Support/Barriers</td>
<td>b. “From what little I know of my program’s process; it seems to have an established set of procedures that attempts to value the student and remain as objective as possible to protect client”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Application of Experience</td>
<td>a. “I think I've grown a lot of confidence”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Professional growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Personal growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Influence and Intersection of Identity</td>
<td>“Multicultural concerns are a significant aspect to gatekeeping. Because white communities tend to be more active within mental health communities, there is a high degree of white privilege surrounding the field that often is not directly in the awareness of students/supervisees. Establishing this awareness and making steps toward reducing the effects of bias with regard to culture allows the most sensitive and attuned care to be provided to clients.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Composite Textural Description**

Following the steps of phenomenological reduction, the individual textural descriptions above were combined to form a coherent composite textural description which is organized by thematic labels including sub themes. These labels are listed in Table 12.

Table 12.

**Composite Individual Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation</td>
<td>a. Clinical experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disposition</td>
<td>a. Gatekeeper disposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Supervisee disposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Burden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support/Barriers</td>
<td>a. Faculty supports/barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Program supports/barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Application of Experience</td>
<td>a. Professional growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Recommendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12 (Cont.)

| 6. Influence and Intersection of Identity |

Table 13 includes statements made by participants which demonstrates these themes. These statements are only found in the following table and represent a composite textural description. Sections following this table include a more thorough description, and additional quotations.

Table 13.

Composite textural descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participant quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Preparation | “Prior to that it wasn't something that was talked about or addressed. Not something that you really felt comfortable or competent and so like just that level of preparation I don't feel like was there until it happens.” (David, interview).

“I think I wished I would have been intentional about it sooner because it might have helped the process go along with that master's student a lot sooner” (Emily, interview).

“I kind of felt like, oh, I was just [recently] a master student” (Emily, interview).

“The gatekeeping role was formally introduced to me in the Foundations of Counselor Education class where we had very insightful research-based discussions, and also got to learn from the myriad of experiences the professor shared. The gatekeeping role was further reinforced in the Supervision of Counselors class, as we not only got the theory of it, but learned how to actively put in” (Sharon, interview).

I think another big barrier is that they talk about gatekeeping during the master's program, but they don't really teach you what would constitute a big red flag in the program itself.” (Maria, interview).

“I was scared to death, and that was also the semester that I had probably the most challenging supervisee. I think how things might've been different if I would've had her this semester, four or five semesters later.” (Laura, interview)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participant quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparation</td>
<td>“I feel like the program has provided adequate preparation. However, I do think that the gatekeeping role could be emphasized in more classes at the doctoral to make the process of moving it from theory to practice more seamless.” (Claire, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The initial class really did open my eyes to like the importance of this role as counselor educator that was probably the most influential. Hearing stories from the professor on like what we’re doing and why we're doing it and realizing that “oh my gosh this is so important”. I never even heard the word remediation or gatekeeping in my master’s program. I didn't even know that was a thing. It wasn't discussed. I never took it as this really serious thing that is occurring, I knew it was being evaluated but it more felt like a grade rather than you could be. So, hearing at the class was like kind of weight of what it means to be a counselor educator, really part of the pressure of the professional identity, was definitely impressed on me” (Paul, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We come up with a plan and then that’s in place and they see if they meet those kind of growth requirements. So that’s a vague understanding that I have but I can't tell you the exact steps” (Paul, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Definitely just some uncertainty about the process before you’re actually put in supervisory role. Because when you learn as you go it's like “oh should I have caught this sooner or should I have addressed this sooner” (Megan, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Disposition</td>
<td>“I think a lot of issues arise based off of someone’s response. How well do you handle feedback, and how if you can’t respond to or take feedback how do you expect to be in position to give feedback?” (David, interview).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Personality traits open to feedback, willingness to learn, and passion for the field support the gatekeeping process. It allows for a more competent counselor to come out of the other side.” (Emily, interview). A know-it-all attitude can hinder a supervisee’s room to grow. And if they find themselves in remediation situation, they may not understand why thus limiting their ability to grow into a competent counseling professional” (Maria, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Participant quotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disposition</td>
<td>“More and more, I have seen the influence of a supervisee’s own personal attachment style be the mediating factor in gatekeeping outcomes” (Megan, interview).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I don't particularly enjoy doing evaluations. Those still feel challenging at times, but I also don't really like our program’s evaluations. But then there's also this personally, when I do my evaluations with my supervisors, I hate that as well. So just that whole process feels incongruent with me, and that's challenging” (Laura, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Responsibility</td>
<td>“I think that [gatekeeping] primarily falls on supervisors” (David, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think it's very essential because we're mental health providers” (Emily, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“As a doc student, here it is, I'm going to be honest. I was over it, it's some bullshit. I don't know if I can say this in your interview. But I am busy. You a doc student, you know, we got so much to do, we teaching, we're busy. We writing papers. If I got to take out because we have three supervisees at a time, if I require about three hours a week for individual supervision. That's not including reviewing tape, that's not including reviewing transcripts, that's not including going to my supervision of supervision and you can't even come into supervision prepared. I don't want to do this.” (Sharon, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The power and the potential of good supervision, creating a safe place where for supervisees, where it is okay to be vulnerable, it is okay to be authentic. It is okay to bring in your worst tapes. It is okay to talk about countertransference, and how you're being impacted in a session. That's where the growth takes place in my mind” (Laura, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It was part of that process and if I didn't do that potentially someone could have gone out, um, and hurt clients. Just because they didn't know what they were doing. So, I think that was my biggest, biggest hardship just maybe some guilt around, um- I was thinking, like, yeah, I'm at fault for, maybe kind of interrupting this person's process.” (Claire, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I need to find really concrete examples and present them in a way that you're not going to just get defensive but say it in a way that's helpful and that we can be on the same page. I think that, I had a lot of hesitation just because I don't have very extensive clinical experience.” (Megan, interview).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13 (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participant quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Support/</td>
<td>“Some programs seem to have a good sense and protocol regarding gatekeeping; others don’t. No consistency even among accredited programs” (Laura, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>“Overall, it appears the profession performs gatekeeping procedures haphazardly, it’s very inconsistent. From several conference dialogues and ongoing interactions, it is evident gatekeeping is a popular topic and growing issue. Ultimately, many programs and CE’s are looking for support. From the discussions I’ve been engaged in, programs (typically smaller) have a designated individual to handle gatekeeping procedures, resulting in this faculty member to perceive their colleagues as absolved of the gatekeeping responsibility.” (David, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“My program provides an abundant amount of hands-on experience in all the expectant roles of a counselor educator (teacher, service, supervisor, researcher). Our confidence as counselor educators is also nurtured by our mentors and supervisors.” (Emily, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I would say that it is different for my cohort members who are working at a clinic.... I know they talk about gatekeeping a lot more. Get to see it because they’re a lot more engage with that than a lot of us are because of how it works at those clinics. Each of these clinics.” (Maria, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I want someone to value gatekeeping and supervision as much as I do, and at times in my program right now I don’t feel like that’s the case I get, there’s a lot of politics in programs. The more students you admit, the more money you make off of their departmental fees, and it keeps the lights on. And I understand that, but it shouldn’t let you let people in the program who are not a good fit or keep people in the program who could go out and do harm. I don’t want to play those games.” (Laura, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What I’ve experienced in agency work in the field, as long as you get reimbursed by managed care, no one seems to care how you work with clients. It’s scary to think about” (Laura, interview).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 13 (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Participant quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Support/ Barriers</td>
<td>“The people that I've worked with I've, I've felt listened to, I've felt, heard when I communicate things to them. Um, doesn't necessarily mean that things always changed. I guess the way it's supposed to. I would really say that I've worked with great faculty who have paid attention.” (Claire, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We are in a tough spot, yeah. Because, like, you know, you can see it, you can say but at that point, um, that's pretty much all you can do really. You know, relay that information on to the next person above them, um, so to speak. But it doesn't always necessarily mean that something is going to change, especially at a certain stage, you know” (Claire, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I think another barrier is that it's just not talked about with the Master’s-level students. So, when it like I can't think of a time I've heard of that happening where the supervisor was just like wait why what's going on. And I think not to necessarily normalize it because it is concerning, but I know they talk about it like at orientation, but to bring it up throughout the program I think would just help students not panic when it comes up” (Megan, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Application of Experience</td>
<td>“I have to be very empathic with them and I have to be very open in um kind of just like more willing to listen to what's going on in order to for them to be very honest with me about their cases. So, um I had to adopt more of my counseling skills when I was a supervisor” (Emily, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I'm not as afraid as confrontation and I'm more willing to take on assignments with more responsibility somehow I have more confidence within myself and I think it shows a lot more in my supervision too um because I don't second guess myself as much as I did at the very beginning” (Maria, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I really valued supervision in my own development. Now on the other side, as a supervisor, I think that just gets strengthened every semester” (Laura, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I'm responding differently this time feeling less and maybe turning inwards and blaming myself and I'm not doing that this time, which to me is a kind of a bit of growth” (Paul, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Participant quotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Application of Experience</td>
<td>“I hope it's easier to identify some red flags earlier. So even in the interview process that maybe those things will be more apparent or cause me to ask different types of questions around those issues” (Megan, interview).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Influence and Intersection of Identity</td>
<td>“The circumstances I’ve experienced with gatekeeping often becomes personalized where the students reflect it’s because of the color of their skin, because they have children, working multiple jobs, disability, etc. not because they are lacking in professional skills” (David, interview). “I also heard the advice from other Hispanic females to not be afraid to use your voice. Usually we are rendered silent because of our status as a minority and our gender. We have to vigilant about being heard. This is another reason why I second guessed my need to share my experiences with the supervisee. I wondered if the supervisee was truly struggling or if I was testing that I was heard by the supervisee and my supervisors?” (Emily, interview). “The circumstances I’ve experienced with gatekeeping often becomes personalized where the students reflect it’s because of the color of their skin, because they have children, working multiple jobs, disability, etc. not because they are lacking in professional skills” (David, interview). “I also think that students experience gatekeeping differently. I'm an African American woman. I feel like I've heard more students of color being held more accountable than white students, like students get a pass. People are more apt to be forgiving of their unprofessional behavior than students of color. So, I'd say that also impacts who is actually being remediated or put on plan, based on how they're being perceived by the staff.” (Sharon, interview). “So, them being, kind of worried about, you know, talking about their experiences. It wasn't so much because of safety, it was just that fear that exists where it's like, you know, “How do I address this kind of, you know, racial issue”. It just boils down to that racial thing. Um, because they didn't have to do that before” (Claire, interview). “My white and heterosexual identities help me to model the awareness of the limited perspective of my majority experience in hopes of lowering the defensiveness of my predominantly white, heterosexual supervisees. My role as a woman helps me to attune, to a degree, to the felt sense of oppression from a dominant culture” (Megan, interview).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preparation

Eight participants from three CACREP accredited CES programs reported a range of experiences in their preparation for gatekeeping roles and responsibilities. Six participants stated that they did not feel well-prepared by their program from the gatekeeper role, one described their preparation as adequate, and only one reported satisfaction with their preparation. All participants described having to learn through experience and emphasized the importance of the experiential learning process as related to gatekeeping.

Clinical experience. Half of the participants had completed their LPC licensure prior to beginning the doctoral program. All these participants described how their own clinical experience and supervision experience helped prepare them. For example, David described the impact of his clinical experience as follows: “I think having the clinical experience knowing what these future counselors will be exposed to have to” (David, interview).

Participants shared that prior supervisors had discussed or modeled the gatekeeper role. They felt that having licensure supervision and supervision experiences beyond their master’s program familiarized them with the process. They described how their clinical experiences illustrated which competencies and dispositions were appropriate/inappropriate for the profession. These participants described how they integrated their clinical experience in conceptualizing supervisee’s they described ways it informed how they provided feedback and encouragement. They described how their professional identity illustrated the need for gatekeeping CES and appeared to be more committed to the gatekeeper role as a result. Many of these participants discussed how their prior clinical experience made them frustrated by their programs gatekeeping processes, and how that they felt their programs did not endorse the same professional values they developed from their experiences.
Half of the participants did not complete their licensure process prior to interviewing. These participants described that were able to adopt the gatekeeper role despite their lack of prior clinical experience. However, many of these participants stated their lack of prior clinical experience was a barrier. They described feeling like an “imposter”, struggling to develop confidence, and demonstrate competence. Some of these participants stated they struggled to adjust to their new identity and role as doctoral-level supervisors, because they were recently master’s students.

**Disposition**

Disposition was described by participants as wide range of factors including personality traits, social/emotional intelligence, ethics, and behaviors related to professionalism. These factors seemed to greatly influence their experiences. All the participants identified how their own disposition impacted their experiences and described in detail about how supervisee’s dispositions were significant. The role disposition played in the supervisory alliance was discussed by all the participants. Both gatekeeper and supervisee disposition appeared to greatly influence their experience of gatekeeping roles/responsibilities of evaluating, monitoring, and providing feedback.

**Gatekeeper disposition.** All the participants described ways in which their dispositions were beneficial during their experiences and identified ways which they created challenges. Most of the participants described empathy, warmth, and conscientiousness as qualities which helped them facilitate a supervisory relationship with their supervisees. One participant discussed how their sense of humor helped them connect with supervisees. Many of the participants described struggling to give critical feedback because they did not want to harm the relationship or their supervisee. Several described experiencing difficulties with confrontation. Many described
themselves as “introverted” or “anxious” or endorsed perfectionistic qualities. For these participants fulfilling their evaluative role was particularly challenging.

**Supervisee disposition.** Supervisee disposition was described as very impactful and one of the most common factors leading to gatekeeping. The participants described their experiences with supervisees who were open to feedback, incorporated feedback, were motivated to learn, and had positive self-awareness. They described struggling with supervisees who were defensive, emotionally reactive, and lacked insight. “Supervisees who are timid or embarrassed to speak up for themselves or to ask for consultation can act as a barrier to gatekeeping. Supervisees who have a know-it-all attitude can also act as a barrier.” (Maria, interview).

The participants described the dispositional issues which initiated gatekeeping as professionalism, ethics, emotional reactivity, receptivity to feedback, and lack of insight. The participants spoke and wrote at great length regarding supervisee disposition and at several points it appeared that this sub-theme was one that prompted the strongest emotional reaction in the participants. Table 14 summarizes participants’ written descriptions of which concerns initiate gatekeeping, as well as personality traits which support or act as barriers during the gatekeeping process.

**Table 14.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisee disposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of statements</th>
<th>Supervisee concerns which are most likely to initiate gatekeeping</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Supervisee personality traits that support the gatekeeping process</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Supervisee personality traits that act as barriers in the gatekeeping process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Multicultural Competence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self-aware/reflective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lack insight/awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Emotional Reactivity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Honestly/Humility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lack of theory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Warm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Receptivity to feedback</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Genuine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lack of self-awareness’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Authentic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personal struggles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Responsibility**

The participants described gatekeeping as “essential”, “vital”, and “necessary”. All participants stated that they believed gatekeeping was an important responsibility for counselor educators, CES programs, and doctoral-level supervisors. Many participants stated that they felt burdened by this role. They described the interaction between believing gatekeeping is necessary, feeling their role was important, and coping with the difficulties associated with their role.

**Necessity.** Many of the participants described gatekeeping as “protecting the public”. They described how incompetent, unethical, and unprofessional, counselors can hurt their clients. Several spoke about how allowing students with PPCs direct client contact harms the credibility of the profession. Some stated they did not believe good gatekeeping is occurring in the field, and that gatekeeping is more difficult to implement post-graduation. They described that this increased the necessity for gatekeeping in the academic setting.
**Burden.** Participants described several ways they felt burdened by their role. Providing evaluations and feedback to supervisees and faculty was described as a challenge. One participant summarized the difficulty in providing evaluations and feedback as follows: “Finding out what examples do I want to give to you to demonstrate this. Because I don't want to just tell you that you're not being multi culturally responsive.” (Megan, interview).

Several participants stated they believed their concerns regarding supervisees were not valued by faculty and they were forced to continue working with supervisees’ exhibiting significant PPC. Many participants described not only an emotional burden, but also the burden of time and energy to effectively gatekeep through continuous monitoring and evaluation. Balancing their obligations as a supervisor with those as a student was also described as difficult.

**Support/Barriers**

Participants identified several supports and barriers including faculty and their program in a general sense. They described these supports and barriers as impactful during their experiences. Many described how they felt faculty were often helpful but that their program was often a barrier. For example, when asked to describe how faculty and the program support or act as a barrier to gatekeeping Laura described the gatekeeping culture of her program as: “lacking. There are different standards and objectives it seems amongst faculty and there’s no clear model or protocol until …a significant problem occurs. Gatekeeping should be an ongoing process throughout students’ education/program.” (Laura, interview).

**Faculty.** Faculty were often described as facilitating the development of their gatekeeper identity and providing support during their experiences. Several participants described that faculty was available to provide feedback or suggestions. This is illustrated by the following
statement: “I think the professors themselves, they're really, really supportive and if you have any type of question or any concern they're there.” (Maria, interview).

Many of the participants stated that they received support through faculty instruction, supervision, and mentorship. Some participants identified a single faculty member as the most impactful support, or model for the gatekeeping process.

Some participants reported feeling unsupported and frustrated by faculty. Several participants stated that they felt the concerns were not taken seriously, or that faculty did not take gatekeeping seriously. Some participants described perceiving or evaluating student’s differently than their faculty. Differences in values, and professional identity were mentioned by some participants. She also stated that faculty was not busy or unavailable when needed.

Program. The faculty dynamics, institutional culture, and academic rigor were frequently described as either a support or a barrier. Programs in which faculty was described as “communicating well” and “getting along” were described as generally supportive. However, programs in which faculty failed to communicate, and in which there was conflict were described as creating barriers. Several participants mentioned enrollment as a barrier for gatekeeping during admissions and throughout. They described the desire to increase or maintain enrollment discouraged gatekeeping. The size of the program was mentioned as important and one participant described the institution’s R1 status as a support, while another stated they felt the large size of their program made gatekeeping more difficult. Some participants felt that their academic program did hold the same personal and professional values. These participants stated they believed the focus of their program was on research, and not on clinical competency, or gatekeeping. Some participants discussed their role in the program as a barrier. They described that being part of the gatekeeping processes as a non-faculty member was conflicting.
Participants frequently believed their program culture did not support or encourage gatekeeping. One participant described their program culture as follows: “I would say that, overall, not a culture that supports gatekeeping.” (Sharon, interview).

**Application of experience**

Participants described experiencing significant growth as a result of their gatekeeping experiences. As a result of their experiences the participants developed recommendations for CES programs, as well changes they would like to institute at a program level. They described how they were able to take “something away from these experiences and there is something to show for it.” (David, interview). The participants described gatekeeping as one of their most important experiences within their programs. All participants described ways in which they have applied their experiences towards supervision, teaching, and clinical work. For many, these experiences facilitated significant personal growth and were meaningful outside of the professional setting.

**Professional growth.** Regarding professional growth, several participants stated that they developed a better understanding of and alignment with a supervision model. They described developing a better understanding of gatekeeping policies and procedures at their institution. Several stated that these experiences gave them a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of counselor educators. All identified gaining some confidence and competence within the gatekeeper role. Many stated that they learned to implement better boundaries with supervisees as well as ways to attend to the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Some stated that they grew in ways that made them better clinicians. For several, these experiences impacted their approach to supervision and instruction.
Personal growth. Many of the participants identified areas of professional development that overlapped with areas of personal growth. For many of these participants, they recognized that the skills they developed as a result of their gatekeeping experiences were applicable outside of their academic position. Some participants mentioned that as a result of their experiences they developed the ability to be assertive and use confrontation. They also described developing an increase in self-confidence, decreasing self-doubt, and improved feelings of self-worth.

Recommendations. Most of the participants reported feeling underprepared for their role and developed several recommendations for CES programs to better prepare doctoral-level supervisors for the gatekeeping role. They stated that they want programs to highlight the gatekeeper role prior to beginning supervision and throughout the course of their studies. Many wanted programs to institute experiential learning activities, such as case studies, watching tape, and role plays. The creation of a gatekeeping course or seminar which would be completed prior to beginning supervision was suggested. Some participants stated they wanted programs to increase the involvement and influence of doctoral-level supervisors in gatekeeping processes.

All the participants suggested that programs more explicitly discuss gatekeeping policies and procedures with doctoral-level students. Participants stated that they would like CES in general to increase its emphasis on gatekeeping. They stated they want CES programs to become more proactive towards gatekeeping, create more rigorous assessment procedures, and decrease their leniency towards students exhibiting PPCs. Many participants stated that they would like master’s students to receive more information on gatekeeping, as well as their institution’s policies.
Influence and Interaction of Identity

All the participants described attending to multicultural concerns and developing multicultural competency as important and related to their experiences. Multicultural competency was identified as one of the most important skills for supervisees, and one of most common concerns which lead to gatekeeping. For several, their identity was described as extremely impactful, and often as a challenge or support, particularly for participants with a visible minoritized status. The identity of supervisees was also described as impactful.

I know that my sex, ethnicity, and orientation all influence my work even before I realized it. I am aware of the power a supervisor holds and being male in a country that has been male dominated requires sensitive and care. This same awareness and care are required as my orientation is not in the minority and I have privilege that is given inherently” (Paul, interview).

In general, it appeared that for the participants of color, their race/ethnicity was the most meaningful aspect of their identity. One participant described feeling like they were evaluated unfairly and described experiencing implicit racial bias. Another participant felt responsible to address ethnic or racial differences. For some, they felt that within their culture, women typically are less likely to possess positions of authority or are less likely to speak. Some participants described feeling angry as a result, some described how their own identity made it more difficult to develop the gatekeeper identity, and for some, they approached the topic with equanimity.

One participant stated that they believed their sexual orientation helped them to model difficult conversations with supervisees. One of the participants stated they used their status as woman to facilitate understanding of minorities/victimized clients and supervisees. Both male participants spoke primarily about responding to their supervisees’ identities in an inclusive manner. They described being mindful of their privilege and attempting to facilitate the development of multicultural competency within their supervisees. All the participants described having multiple
identities and described their interaction. For all of them, attending to identity was described as important, impactful, and challenging for the gatekeeper.

**Individual Structural Descriptions**

The third phase within the phenomenological reduction process is the use of imaginative variation in order to create individual structural descriptions which capture how each participant experienced the phenomenon, including the cognitive and emotional experience of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These descriptions support textural description of the experience by capturing the context in which the participants experienced the phenomenon, and how they experienced it emotionally and cognitively (Moustakas, 1994). Individual structural descriptions were then combined in order to create composite structural description.

**David**

David identified as a white male who entered the program as a licensed counselor. He stated that professional identity instilled the importance of gatekeeping, increased his desire to gatekeep, and increased his frustration at students exhibiting PPCs. He reported prior knowledge and experiences of gatekeeping at his prior institute. He described feeling proud of how his prior program addressed gatekeeping and describe feeling frustrated and angry regarding how his current program addresses gatekeeping. He described feeling powerless in his position and described gatekeeping as a “chore”. He shared how these feelings have increased during the program, leading him to feel resentful.

**Emily**

Emily identified as Hispanic female who entered the program as a recent master’s graduate. She described herself as “not very assertive” and stated that she felt “nervous” and wanted to “do a good job” when she began supervising. Emily described feeling “frustrated”
with herself and second-guessing herself. She stated the first time she had to give challenging feedback to a supervisee, she “started shaking” and blushed. She described having to “stay calm” and “take a deep breath” with challenging supervisees. She stated that she felt stressed and overwhelmed managing her roles and responsibilities as a student supervisor. She described the gatekeeping role as important and challenging.

Sharon

Sharon identified as an African American female. She entered the program as a licensed counselor. Sharon reported a great deal of frustration in how her program addressed gatekeeping. She stated that the program and faculty to do not value gatekeeping. She stated that she did not believe the program’s values aligned with her own and felt frustrated as a result. She described feeling angry regarding the focus of the program stating: “The program is large, and its focus is on research. I don't even know if people really care if the counselors are strong”.

Sharon stated she felt like she was evaluated differently than white students and reported feeling angry at the lack of objectivity in how students in her program were evaluated. She described gatekeeping at her program as “bullshit”, a “waste of time” and stated that she “[is] over it”. She stated that throughout her supervision experience, she was unsupported in addressing students exhibiting PPCs. Sharon described feeling resentment towards the program and faculty as she believed she was more likely to identify and address students with PPCs stating: “you don't want to be that person who always has something negative to say”.

Maria

Maria identified as a Hispanic female. She entered the program as a fully licensed counselor. She described feeling unprepared for the gatekeeping role. Maria described not knowing if she would be able to address a supervisee exhibiting a PPC. Maria described that her
prior clinical experience and professional identity helped during her experience. She gained insight and awareness a result of her experience, stating “I am able to speak up” despite describing as “introverted”. In general, she reported feeling supported by her program and faculty.

**Laura**

Laura identified as a white female who entered the program as recent master’s graduate. She described the gatekeeping process as emotionally challenging, particularly at the beginning. She stated she felt conflicted in her evaluative role and that supervisees who failed to develop through supervision tested some of her core beliefs. Laura felt challenged to maintain her beliefs in growth and self-actualization during her experiences. She stated that she believed many of the faculty in her program did not hold similar values, stating, “I want someone to value gatekeeping and supervision as much as I do”. As a result of her experiences, she stated that she developed confidence in her ability to address problematic supervisees and increase her assertiveness. Laura remarked on her growth by stating: “I'm reflective and I'm not even the same person I was three years ago, and how exciting that is.”

**Claire**

Claire is an immigrant to the United States. She identified as a black female who entered the program as a recent master’s graduate. She stated that she felt supported by her faculty and program during her experiences. She spoke at length regarding the ways her identity impacted her relationships with supervisees, the experience of gatekeeping, and how it influenced the process of supervision. She described herself as “direct” and reported she was concerned with how her feedback would be received as a result. She described feeling guilty when she was required to provide challenging feedback or evaluations. She stated that she valued creating a
safe space in supervision as a result of her experiences. The participant reported that she felt that what she “can do as a doc [toral] supervisor” was limited throughout her experiences.

Paul

Paul identified as a Hispanic male who entered the program as a licensed counselor with prior supervision experience as a clinical director at community counseling center. Paul stated that despite his clinical experience and supervision experience, he was unaware of the gatekeeper role prior to his program. Faculty was described as supportive and available. He described feeling concern regarding the gatekeeping procedures at his program and within the profession. When he encountered defensive or resistant supervisees, he described feeling frustrated and wanting to withdraw from the supervisee. Paul reported feeling frustrated with supervisees who were not motivated for growth. He stated that as a result of his experiences, he developed a better understanding of supervision and increased his confidence. He stated that his experiences fostered a research interest in gatekeeping.

Megan

Megan identified as a white female who entered the program as a recent master’s graduate. She described feeling frustration over ambiguity within gatekeeping and that she struggled with the lack of concreteness in her evaluative role, “so much is relative and subjective”. She stated that she felt discomfort with the level of directness which was required of her. Megan reported difficulties providing critical feedback, stating that she had a “hard time telling people how they are perceived”. She stated she wanted to increase a level of preparedness around gatekeeping prior to supervision. Megan stated she felt supported by faculty and by her supervisor whom she was able to speak with after challenging supervision sessions. She
described developing confidence as a result of her experiences, and a respect for the gatekeeping role.

**Composite Structural Description**

Following the steps of phenomenological reduction, individual structural descriptions have been combined in order to create a composite structural description. The goal is to describe the *how* of the participant’s experience of doctoral-level supervisors adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities.

Participants recognized the importance of preparation for the gatekeeper role, and they described how the presence or absence of prior clinical experience impacted them. Participants identified ways in which their programs have prepared them, and suggested methods programs might use to better prepare future doctoral-level students. All participants described gatekeeping as a necessary and challenging burden. During their experiences, they expressed that faculty were often a support or barrier. Faculty members who were available and took the participants’ concerns seriously were described as a support. Faculty members who were indifferent or reactive towards gatekeeping were described as a barrier.

Program requirements and culture shaped their experiences as well. The presence of a cohort model in programs was described as a support. Programs which emphasized research were described as both a barrier and a support. Several programs were described as lacking a culture of accountability. Negative faculty dynamics and communication were described as barriers. The lack of clarity regarding program policies and procedures was described a barrier, as was the role doctoral-level supervisors have within their programs.

Disposition was described as very impactful, and gatekeepers described emotional reactivity, agreeableness, empathy, anxiety, and perfectionism as traits which made their
experiences more challenging. Several dispositional qualities related to the supervisee were also relevant. Supervisees who were open and receptive to feedback were described as easier to work with and more likely to demonstrate growth. Supervisees who were described as defensive, reactive, and unreceptive towards feedback negatively impacted the participants’ experiences. The identity of both the gatekeeper and supervisee were relevant in several ways. All the participants identified the need to train multiculturally competent counselors, and appropriately attend to identity in supervision.

**Synthesis**

Following the steps outlined previously in Chapter III, a synthesis of what the participants experienced and how they experienced it was achieved through the creation of textural-structural synthesis. This captures the essence of the samples lived experiences as doctoral-level students adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within counselor education. The following sections describe the essence of the phenomenon and how the conceptual framework guided the study.

Developing an identity as a counselor educator is challenging (Dollarhide et al., 2013; Moss et al., 2014). The roles and responsibilities associated with monitoring, evaluating, and remediating students is daunting. Most felt underprepared for this role, and described feeling angry, confused, and anxious as a result. For most, this experience involved feeling like an imposter upon assuming their roles and responsibilities as a doctoral-level supervisor. Of the roles counselor educators are responsible for, gatekeeping is often the least understood and the most dreaded. This role often feels as if it is conflicting with the counselor identity. Providing supervisees and students with critical feedback or evaluations can be perceived as potentially causing harm. Evaluating students and supervisees is often inherently subjective and can feel
ambiguous. Anticipating moving from being a doctoral-level student to a faculty member creates a mixture of excitement, anxiety and self-doubt.

Faculty can provide support and model this role but often do not. Participants believe concerns raised by doctoral-level student are sometimes taken seriously, and occasionally disregarded. When concerns were not taken seriously, doctoral-level students felt less motivated to address student concerns in the future. The culture of the program can support or hinder gatekeeping. Faculty dynamics can be supportive or not, especially if faculty appear to not communicate well or do not have close working relationships. Program gatekeeping policies and procedures are often opaque or poorly discussed. Doctoral-level supervisors would like more explicit and pre-emptive training, they would like their role to be more visible, and they would like their voice to be heard.

Many participants described how students can or did gate slip. This was described as one of the most challenging aspects of their experience. For all the participants, gatekeeping was a topic they were passionate about. Every participant described how their experiences were challenging, impactful, and shaped their development. All identified several areas of growth and developed recommendations as a result. No one appeared to be completely satisfied with the level of gatekeeping at their current or previous their institution. All the participants described believing their interviews were “helpful”, “important” or increasing their awareness.

Ways in which disposition impacted the gatekeeping experience was meaningful. Providing challenging feedback as an empathic person was described as conflicting, addressing a defensive supervisee was described as frustrating and working with an unmotivated supervisee was described as a challenge to basic humanistic values. While the disposition of the gatekeeper appeared pertinent, it was the disposition or personality of the supervisee which seemed to be the
most influential. Receptivity to feedback was described as one of the most vital factors in the supervisee becoming a successful counselor, and a trait which greatly impacted the experience of supervision. The inability to receive and incorporate feedback was described as one of the most challenging aspects of their experience.

**Conclusion**

Findings from the phenomenological study were presented in this chapter. The study consisted of a survey, critical incident writing prompt, semi-structured interview, and written follow-up responses. The following research questions were addressed:

2. How do doctoral-level students describe their lived experience of adopting gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within counselor education?

Additional sub-questions included:

D. How do CES doctoral-level students with gatekeeping experiences describe their experiences in adapting to gatekeeping roles and responsibilities?

E. What are the lived experiences of CES doctoral-level student interactions of personal, interpersonal, and environmental factors when taking on gatekeeping roles?

F. What factors do CES doctoral-level students describe as barriers and supports during their gatekeeping experience?

Data analysis procedures recommended for phenomenological research by Moustakas (1994) were followed. From transcripts and written responses, the following primary themes were identified: preparation, disposition, responsibility, supports/barriers, and application of experience and influence and intersection of identity. Additional sub-themes of clinical experience, necessity, burden, gatekeeper disposition, supervisee disposition, faculty, program,
professional growth, personal growth, and recommendations emerged. Thematic labels were utilized to organize the data into individual textural descriptions which described the *what* of the individual’s experience. These were then combined to form a composite textural description. The researcher then utilized *imaginative variation* during which the researcher sought to examine the data from different points of reference in order to explore potential alternative conclusions. Following this process individual structural descriptions were created, which captures the *how* of the participant’s experience. These individual descriptions were then combined to form a composite structural description. The final step of the phenomenological reduction was a synthesis of the textural and structural descriptions in order to create a unified essence of the participant’s experiences.
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS &
RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to examine doctoral students’ experiences in adopting
gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within counselor education. The researcher believed that
developing a better understanding of this phenomenon could be used to help inform the
education and training of doctoral-level supervisors while helping to prepare doctoral-level
students for gatekeeping roles as future faculty members. The goal of this research is to help make the gatekeeper role of the doctoral-level students more visible and understood. The researcher believed that this is pertinent to the training of both doctoral-level supervisors and master’s-level counseling students. This chapter includes a discussion of the study’s limitations, implications for counselor educators and CES programs, and recommendations for future research.

Summary

Data analysis revealed six primary themes and ten subthemes. These themes were identified in interviews and written responses. The primary themes included: preparation, disposition, responsibility, support/barriers, application of experience, influence and intersection of identity. Subthemes included: clinical experience, gatekeeper disposition, supervisee disposition, necessity, burden, faculty supports/barriers, program supports/barriers, professional growth, and personal growth. Participants described the impact these themes had upon their experience in positive and negative ways.

Limitations

Procedures discussed in Chapter III were utilized in order to establish trustworthiness. However, the present study has several limitations related to the data collection techniques and
the sample. Much of the data was gathered through recorded interviews. Researchers have identified several factors which affect the quality of data obtained through recorded interviews including the effect of being recorded, how interview questions are phrased, what they are discussing, and factors related to the interviewer (Al-Yateem, 2012; Fontana & Frey, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 1982). While steps were taken to limit the effect that the researcher had upon the interview process factors related to the research may have impacted responses. The researcher was solely responsible for conducting interviews and identifies as a white male and at the time of interviews, was a doctoral candidate. Many of the participants described how privilege or their minoritized status impacted them. It is possible that factors related to the researcher’s sex, age, race, prior knowledge, and current role could have affected the interview process. The researcher attempted to acknowledge the influence power and privilege plays in interviews. Some participants asked how the researcher identified, which was disclosed. The semi-structured format of interviews allowed the researcher to attempt to address his identity. Follow-up questions were guided by emergent themes, which included identity. Member checks allowed participants to provide feedback and attempted to reduce the power and influence of the researcher.

Research participation effects such as social desirability and the Hawthorne effect can impact research data (McCambridge et al., 2014; Monahan & Fisher, 2010; Oswald et al., 2014). Participants may have provided different responses because they were being recorded, or answers which they believed pleased the researcher. Gatekeeping is a sensitive topic and major concern for counselor educators (Chang & Rubel, 2019; Corley et al., 2020; Rapp et al., 2018). Participants could have been impacted by a desire to describe their institution or program more favorably or unfavorably. During member checks, participants affirmed the accuracy of
transcripts, and were reminded of steps taken to ensure their anonymity. Three participants stated that they were concerned how they presented their programs. They stated that they would not like to change transcripts but felt bad negatively describing their programs. One participant requested that the researcher remove information as they felt they might be identified and face consequences for their negative evaluation. The researcher followed suggestions by this participant to maintain their anonymity by removing some quotes which they believed would identify them. The wording and format of questions could have also affected responses. Participants completed a survey, a critical incident writing prompt, an interview, and provided written responses to questions. These steps fulfilled the requirement of prolonged engagement and saturation was reached.

Other limitations include the sampling procedures used for the identification and recruitment of participants. Participants who met criteria for participation were identified by the researcher, committee members, and other research participants. The sample size met standards for qualitative research (Creswell & Poth 2018; Mason, 2010). The sample included participants from three southern CACREP-accredited CES programs. There could be limitations due to the region in which the sample was drawn as there is a possibility that samples from other regions may differ. Although the sample included a diverse range of participants, the demographics of the sample could also be a limitation as identity appeared to significantly impact the samples’ experiences. Future research should further explore the gatekeeper role in doctoral-level students who hold a visible minoritized identity. As a result of these limits the experiences of the participants within this study may differ from others. Future research could also explore the role that privilege plays in gatekeeping by exploring the experiences of students who do not hold a visible minoritized identity. This could further the understanding of the affect that identity and
privilege play in supervision and gatekeeping. It could develop suggestions to help support professional identity development and multicultural competency.

**Implications**

The following sections present implications of the study which have been organized into three sections: implications for CES programs, counselor educators, and doctoral-level supervisors. These include implications for doctoral-level students, implications for counselor educators, and implications for CES programs.

**Implications for CES Programs**

Prospective students should be aware of the challenges fulfilling gatekeeper roles and responsibilities within CES. They could be informed of these challenges at the admissions stage and reminded of them throughout their program. If any changes are made to policies, programs should ensure doctoral-level supervisors are knowledgeable of the changes. CES programs should make students aware of these roles and responsibilities prior to beginning supervision or co-instruction through training. Their knowledge of gatekeeping policies should be assessed. The ability to provide evaluations and critical feedback should be trained and assessed. The role of disposition, and identity need to be addressed by CES programs. CES programs need to proactively approach educating students about gatekeeping and the gatekeeping role. This should be built into courses, instilled within the program culture, and addressed by program policies. Statements from the sample suggest that although gatekeeping policies may be available to doctoral-levels students, they may fail to read them unless it is made a requirement through coursework.

CES programs frequently utilize doctoral-level students as supervisors for master’s students in practicum, internship and co-teaching. Participants in the study reported feeling
unprepared for these roles and responsibilities. The results of this study suggest that some CES programs fail to adequately prepare doctoral-level students for the gatekeeping responsibilities associated with these roles. These positions require that doctoral-level students support faculty in the monitoring, evaluating, and remediating of students. The participants reported that they felt often doctoral-level students do not receive formal training in handling these duties prior to taking them on. As a result CES programs should implement training opportunities prior to students’ beginning supervision. This could be achieved in a brief seminar, or by having students take courses which address gatekeeping prior to supervision. CES programs could require that students complete a seminar, or through academic planning require that students enroll in supervision later in their studies. It might be a good idea for CES programs to require a seminar program prior to supervision to ensure students are prepared.

The data suggest that students need CES programs to support gatekeeping. Doctoral-level students need CES programs to guide their training and indoctrination around becoming not only a counselor educator but also an effective gatekeeper. Participants identified the structure of their program as a significant issue. The findings support implementing changes to the structure and climate of CES programs in order to provide gatekeeping training before beginning supervision. This is a challenge but can be achieved through several steps including improving program policies, increasing education regarding gatekeeping for all students, and supporting doctoral-level students as they supervise and co-teach.

The data supported the importance of CES programs upholding CACREP (2016) standards to the highest degree possible. Participants reported the visibility and understanding of gatekeeping within programs should be increased at both the doctoral-level and masters-level. CACREP (2016) standards required that gatekeeping policies should be clear and consistently
implemented (pp. 6. 17-18). Section 6.B. States that CES programs are responsible for providing students with gatekeeping materials, providing education on gatekeeping, and assessing their competency for the gatekeeper role (CACREP, 2016, pp. 34-35). CACREP (2016) standards require CES programs elicit feedback from students and integrate this into training for both doctoral and masters-level students (p. 18). CES programs should define the gatekeeping role for doctoral-level students throughout their course of study (pp. 35-36). CES programs should develop responsive gatekeeping policies and procedures through reviewing, and updating, regularly (CACREP, 2016, p.17).

CES programs should also actively seek ways to increase the efficacy of policies and procedures. Many of these objectives could be achieved through increasing training and assessment of the gatekeeping competencies of doctoral-level students. Several participants stated they knew their program’s gatekeeping materials were available to them, but chose not to read them because they were not required. The participants described feeling multiple pressures, and constraints. From the data it appears that CES could better encourage doctoral students familiarize themselves with gatekeeping policies, fulfill gatekeeping responsibilities, and develop a gatekeeper role through educational requirements.

All the participants reported they would like more information and training from their program prior to beginning supervision. Several made recommendations about how a training process could be implemented. Figure 3 illustrates recommendations about CES program training process made by the participants.
Figure 3. Training cycle developed from participants recommendations

Clinical experience appeared to impact the participants’ experiences. CES programs should consider prior clinical experience when addressing gatekeeping roles and responsibilities. Participants without clinical experience reported imposter syndrome during supervision and mentioned that a lack of clinical examples prevented them from being able to give feedback to supervisees. Struggling to give feedback to supervisees that appeared to have more professional experience or were older was mentioned as being particularly difficult for participants without clinical experience. Participants without clinical experience also appeared to not be as focused on gatekeeping, which could be attributed to lack of experience with the level of harm from a deficient peer or clinician. Whereas, participants who were fully licensed all described their clinical experience as beneficial and discussed how this provided examples to use in supervision. Their experience with seeing how clients can be affected or harmed by PPC also clearly
illustrated the need for gatekeeping. None of the participants with clinical experience mentioned difficulties delivering feedback to supervisees who were perceived to have more power or age than the supervisor.

Table 15 includes recommendations offered by participants.

Table 15.

*Participants’ Program Recommendations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>“One thing I think comes to mind immediately is “why not institute some role plays?” You know we talk about preparation, we talk about gatekeeping stuff but when we were in our master’s-level programs we constantly had to do role plays, like crisis assessments, you know suicide ideation working with someone who is at risk of suicide and practicing getting comfortable asking the question and working through those things right? So, you know maybe we could do case studies.”</td>
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| Emily       | “I would have liked more discussion in class about our videos. Especially with our different cohort members, so you can see their experiences too and that normalizing experience is done a lot sooner than it actually was. The other thing too is we have to start supervising within the first week of the semester it’s the first week of the semester. We haven’t really taken our class, but we need to start talking to this practicum students. So, I think I would want something, I want to be prepped a little more for that.”  

“When we become faculty, we need to hold on to our experiences so we can reach out to doc students more and let them in on the process.” |
| Sharon      | “There need to be a shift around, what do we want? Do we want students who just don’t harm people, or do we want actually students who are professional? I really want to carry the profession forward because I think you have to do something so egregious; I feel like for something to happen is that what you really want to happen. So, the bar is set so low.”  

“That programs need gatekeeping and not just talk about it, that programs either take doc students serious or stop making us do supervision.”  

“Reevaluate what gatekeeping would look like.” |
| Maria       | “I would recommend programs create a course on gatekeeping. Especially in the master’s program... or two or three weeks just talking about gatekeeping”. |
Table 15 (Cont.)

| Laura                      | “As a future counselor educator, I want to work with people who value it. I want to have a system in place. I want it to be comprehensive and implemented and that starts at the admission process, that starts when you first let a student in your program, and it takes place every day until they graduate, if they graduate. And not just, Oh, you're about to graduate now we're panic because you maybe haven't done some of the things that now we realized that you should be doing. Or now we realize that you're struggling in this and it's a concern. At that point in time, it's too late, it feels like. Someone who, yes, as I was a future educator that's what I want in the program and a faculty.” “I would love to see a more comprehensive, from admission to graduation, program for gatekeeping.” “What would I recommend? A comprehensive and implemented model.” |
| Claire                     | As a result of her experiences she reported that she would, “a little bit more frequency in terms of how they check in on students to see where they are” throughout gatekeeping procedures. She stated that she would like CES programs to be more preemptive with gatekeeping” “Change the procedures... it does happen where, kind of get to the end of it and you re-realizing, like, “this person is really not ready. Implementing, stricter measures in terms of trying to, assess people along the way. Just to make sure that they don't get to the end of it, um, and they're not ready cause then that doesn't look good on the program that they're graduating from. And the potential that they will be going out there to not do a good job and that is scary.” Claire stated that she would like CES programs to increase multicultural education, and the visibility that multicultural competency. |
| Paul                       | “Simulate some different case studies, in different ways. I feel like there was some. I wonder if even if there was even tape to show. Like this is what some trouble dispositions look like, so I know what to expect, being able to see some of those things in action, potentially could have been helpful.” “In the program highlighting it earlier, and often more often throughout different classes. Even I think even during an instructorship, a co-teaching opportunity. I wonder if it should be talked about that and how disposition even comes out in the classroom coming on time are they participating or they those are all dispositional things. So, realizing how much those roles are kind of, even our role as gatekeeper is even at play while teaching. I would not have thought about that until a little bit later. So, I think highlighting earlier beneficial for me, I would have been more looking out for it.” |
Table 15 (Cont.)

| Megan   | “I would like to recommend like a supervision seminar. Like a week or two held before a supervision class, just you know even if it is like three hours of like ‘here's essentials of what you need to know’ I think that could really helpful long term in the process of just getting supervisors on the same page before they ever even sit down with the supervisee.” |

Although participants without clinical experience reported struggling more with delivering feedback during supervision, they were also more likely to acknowledge their peers and faculty as support. In considering admissions for doctoral students, CES programs who use a cohort model may want to consider admitting students with varying levels of clinical experience, as participants without clinical experience reported relying on and being supported by their peers with more clinical experience. If a CES program is not using a cohort model, admitting students without clinical experience should be supplemented with additional support and consideration during supervision from faculty members.

CES program faculty need to ensure that all doctoral-level students, regardless of clinical experience levels, are properly trained in their roles and responsibilities as gatekeepers. It is ultimately the responsibility of the program to prepare students for the gatekeeper role, and doctoral-level students should be made aware of their roles by examining their program’s policies and addressing gatekeeping in supervision.

According to the participants, doctoral-level students acting as supervisors frequently have more direct contact with master’s students, and often watch more case presentations than faculty. As a result, doctoral-level supervisors may be more aware of and able to identify students with PPCs. Participants reported that doctoral-level students often assume other informal gatekeeping roles and responsibilities which they were unprepared for. The participants
were often able to identify students exhibiting a PPC but lacked training in addressing PPCs. Doctoral-level students often provide evaluations of students and critical feedback but can lack the skills and knowledge on how to do this.

Doctoral studies should facilitate professional identity development. CES programs should facilitate this through training, providing experiential learning opportunities, and actively supporting students through mentorship, modeling, and supervision. Included in Appendix I are some examples of written assignments, and role plays which could be easily incorporated in several courses.

One of the primary roles and responsibilities of counselor educators is gatekeeping. The sample described these experiences as some of the most impactful on their professional development and emotionally challenging during their training. CES programs need to support doctoral-level students as they navigate these experiences. Many of the participants stated they believed their evaluations and concerns were not valued. Several stated that they wanted to abandon their responsibilities. Participants frequently described feeling unvalued, or that the program did not share their values. CES programs need to find ways to demonstrate that they value the role of doctoral-level students in supervisor and co-teaching positions. The participants’ suggested that programs could to find ways to elicit and incorporate feedback from students. Participants’ statements suggest that programs should develop ways to encourage doctoral-level students to fulfill their challenging duties and assess if they are unable to due to burnout. Problems identified by the participants are presented with potential solutions in table 16.
# Program Problems & Solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Problem</th>
<th>Potential Solution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral-level students do not adequately understand the gatekeeping polices of their program.</td>
<td>1. Prior to supervision require that students understand gatekeeping policies thoroughly.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Provide program policies to doctoral level students and provide instruction on these policies at the beginning of student’s education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Integrate gatekeeping assignments, and activities throughout the program curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Continually assess student’s level of competency of the policies through assignments and throughout coursework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral-level students feel unprepared for gatekeeping roles and responsibilities.</td>
<td>1. Require formal gatekeeping training prior to supervision. This could include coursework, experiential learning activities, and a seminar. These should address knowledge, as well as dispositional factors related to the gatekeeper role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Doctoral-level students could be included, in order to share their own experiences and normalize the challenges related to gatekeeping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Faculty should formally assess doctoral level student’s readiness and capacity for gatekeeping roles and responsibilities throughout their training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral-level students feel unsupported, burdened, or burnt-out by gatekeeping roles and responsibilities.</td>
<td>1. Faculty should attempt to provide mentorship, check-in with students, be available, and normalize their experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The assignment of supervisee’s should be responsive to the student’s current ability to fulfill gatekeeping responsibilities. Faculty should attempt to be responsive to the students’ level of clinical experience, prior supervision experience, and current course load.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Facilitate peer mentorship and support. Potentially institute a process group during supervision to address the gatekeeper role.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Program Problems & Solutions

| Doctoral-level students feel their disposition and or identity make fulfilling their gatekeeper roles and responsibilities more challenging. | 1. Include gatekeeper and supervisee dispositional factors in training. Including factors related to personality.  
2. Require that students identify dispositional factors which support or act as barrier to the gatekeeper role.  
3. Facilitate dialog regarding identity, address the role that supervisor and supervisee identities play within gatekeeping.  
4. Potentially provide additional support for supervisors who are a visible minority.  
5. Emphasize the importance of developing multicultural competency. |
| --- | --- |
| Doctoral-level students feel their program, and or faculty to not create a culture which supports gatekeeping. | 1. Require that students provide a written agreement to abide by program standards include those related to gatekeeping.  
2. Provide instruction to master’s level students on program gatekeeping policies including the role of doctoral level supervisors at the beginning of their instruction.  
3. Elicit and integrate student feedback through evaluation forms and discussions.  
4. Make gatekeeping visible, and emphasize its importance throughout doctoral level and master’s- level education.  
5. Inform doctoral level students on how their evaluations or concerns are being utilized.  
6. Reduce faculty dynamics (conflict between faculty members, favoritism, and other forms of bias) which may hinder gatekeeping policies and procedures from being implemented when appropriate. |
Figure 4 represents potential program changes recommended by participants which CES programs could implement.

**Figure 4. Potential program changes**

**Implications for Counselor Educators**

Based on participants’ experiences, it would likely be helpful if faculty devote time and energy to assessing how doctoral-level students are adjusting to their roles and responsibilities. They should model and share their personal experiences as appropriate. Counselor educators should assess how knowledgeable their doctoral-level students are, what levels of clinical experience they have, and their ability and willingness to fulfill gatekeeping roles and responsibilities. Counselor educators should be responsive to students’ prior clinical experience, ability, and dissipation. They should allow these factors to inform the decision-making process...
of how to include doctoral-level students in co-teaching and supervision of masters-level students.

The participants’ responses suggest that counselor educators could be more intentional about how they support the professional development of doctoral-level students and include them in gatekeeping processes. Faculty members are responsible for making decisions regarding the admission, remediation, and dismissal of students. However, doctoral-level students often play informal roles within these processes. The position of doctoral-level supervisor is not only challenging, but also important. Because of this counselor educators should be thoughtful in how they include doctoral-level students in gatekeeping processes, facilitate professional development, and provide support as they navigate their experiences.

Participants’ stated that gatekeeping policies and procedures can be unclear, and students are often unaware of them. The gatekeeping policies and procedures of CES programs should be clarified when possible. Counselor educators should make the gatekeeping polices at their institutions explicit to doctoral-level students. Gatekeeping policies should also be discussed with masters’ students. Counselor educators should be mindful to model and support the development of the gatekeeper role through mentorship and supervision. Faculty members’ should assess how doctoral-level students are adapting to the gatekeeping role. Counselor educators could support the development of the gatekeeper role through assignments, discussions, and role play throughout the program. The role that disposition and personality plays regarding gatekeeping should be addressed within training of doctoral-level students. Multicultural competency was identified as one of the primary concerns leading to gatekeeping, and the identity of the gatekeeper was identified as significant. Counselor educators should be aware of, and responsive to, the role that identity plays in gatekeeping.
Counselor educators can also be mindful of supervision assignments in relation to clinical experience level and the commitments and responsibilities of doctoral-level supervisors outside of supervision. In an ideal environment, counselor educators would be able to anticipate and assign supervisees to doctoral supervisors in consideration of the stage of their doctoral program and clinical experience to reduce and manage potential burnout of supervisors. Greater transparency in how supervision assignments are made, increased flexibility in supervision assignments to accommodate feedback from doctoral-level supervisors before assignment decisions are made, and increased consideration of the available time and energy doctoral students have for supervision from doctoral-level supervisors could all be integrated into assignments on behalf of counselor educators.

**Implications for Doctoral-level Supervisors**

It is the responsibility of CES programs to prepare doctoral-level students for the gatekeeping role. CES programs should help students become knowledgeable about the gatekeeping policies and procedures in their program. However, according to the participants CES programs often fail to do this. Doctoral-level students should actively seek out support from their faculty, colleagues, as well as others outside their program. They should utilize their own supervision to get feedback, support, and guidance in navigating these experiences. In order to facilitate growth, doctoral-level students should explore how their own disposition and personality act as supports or barriers in navigating gatekeeping roles and responsibilities. They could use peers and faculty to process how their disposition relates to their role and professional development. Seeking feedback from supervisors, and other faculty regarding how their disposition affects their supervision and teaching could help develop insight and awareness. Doctoral-level students should be open and honest when they seek out feedback. The participants
described significant personal and professional growth when they were honest about their abilities and limitations. The findings suggest that being honest about personality traits aided the supervision process and reduced defensiveness.

Gatekeeping disposition should be explicitly discussed by doctoral-level students with the students they co-instruct or supervise. In order to facilitate supervisee growth, doctoral-level students should be responsive to their disposition. Gatekeeping requires a great deal of time and energy. Doctoral-level students should be aware of the responsibilities they are committing to prior to agreeing to take on supervision and co-instruction roles. Despite this being the responsibility of faculty this may require that they actively ask faculty for guidance. Finally, doctoral-level students should provide support, model gatekeeping, and mentor their colleagues as they assume gatekeeping roles and responsibilities.

Doctoral-level supervisors also need to advocate for themselves and acknowledge their time and resources to be able to deliver supervision. In CES programs that use a cohort model, doctoral-level supervisors should feel an obligation to promote and support their colleagues in supervision, gatekeeping and actively avoiding burnout. Doctoral-level supervisors should also acknowledge the role they play in developing the culture of a CES program through their interactions with faculty and students and take responsibility for ensuring that this culture supports gatekeeping. The more doctoral-level supervisors advocate for themselves and each other, the more responsive counselor educators and CES programs can become.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Recommendations for future research are based upon the findings of the study, limitations of the study, and implications. Several areas for future research were highlighted by the present study. These recommendations are presented in the following.
Participants described their preparation for the gatekeeper role as lacking and provided several recommendations for CES programs. One of the primary recommendations was the implementation of a course or seminar prior to supervision. Research on the impact of supervision and teaching seminars prior to applying these skills may be beneficial to assess if such courses are helpful in preparing students, and what needs to be included. Similarly, participants suggested that gatekeeping be addressed throughout their program of study in activities and assignments. For example, programs could require that students address gatekeeping assignments during the supervision course, foundations, and multicultural courses. Student could be prompted to specifically describe how they would address different PPCs according to their supervision theory, teaching philosophy, and identify which CACREP and ACA codes are relevant to the issue. Students could also role play these scenarios and record role plays. Faculty and students could provide feedback during class discussions for written and role play responses. The efficacy of their responses and feedback could be provided by faculty and fellow students. Programs and faculty could document how these assignments fulfill CACREP standards. The effect of these interventions could be explored and inform CES programs. Future research could also further explore what steps CES are utilizing to prepare students for gatekeeping and how faculty supports the development of the gatekeeper identity.

This sample included doctoral-level students enrolled in CES programs at three southern CACREP-accredited programs. Repeating a similar study in different regions or at non-CACREP accredited programs could yield different results and may lead to additional facets of understanding of this experience. The participants in this sample noted that their own identities, and the identities held by their supervisee’s, were significant in their experiences of gatekeeping. For example, “everything I've experienced so far in my life, it comes into the room with me as a
supervisor, as a clinician, as an instructor.” (Emily, interview). They also described the identity of their supervisee as significant. “I have to be mindful of how the student/CIT identify and will likely respond to my position of being in a power position and having several factors of privilege” (David, interview). Repeating the procedures with another sample could explore the lived experiences of participants with different identities than those which were captured by the current sample. Similarly, future research could further explore how minoritized faculty and doctoral-level students experience the gatekeeping phenomenon. Multicultural competence was identified as one of the most common issues leading to gatekeeping. Researchers may also consider exploration of how faculty and doctoral-level supervisors facilitate the development of multicultural competencies in practicum and internship students’ in the context of supervision.

The present study focused on doctoral-level students’ experiences of gatekeeping in the context of supervising master’s students. Additional research may benefit from exploration of how faculty and master’s-level students experience gatekeeping procedures. Similarly, research could explore gatekeeping in other contexts, such as teaching, and admissions. How doctoral-level students are gatekept, and the experiences of gatekeeping at the doctoral could also be explored. Finally, the sample reported a great deal of ambiguity around how faculty address PPCs, as well as the decision-making process involved in choosing to remediate a student or not. Future research could explore how faculty choose to remediate students.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of doctoral-level students’ as they adopt gatekeeping roles and responsibilities within counselor education. The sample was recruited from three CACREP accredited CES programs. After agreeing to participate the participants provided demographic information, completed a critical gatekeeping incident writing
prompt, interview two questions were guided by emergent themes and participants provided written responses to interview two questions via email. The researcher utilized a transcendental phenomenological approach to guide the study. Procedures recommended by Moustakas’ (1994) for data analysis were followed. Following the procedures for phenomenological reduction individual and composite textural descriptions were synthesized with structural descriptions in order to describe the essence of the participant’s experience.

Gatekeeping is a major concern for counselor education, it is a necessity, and a challenge. Participants described gatekeeping similarly. However, doctoral-level students can navigate the roles and responsibilities associated with their role. They can develop confidence and competence with the gatekeeping process. Doctoral-level students can experience professional and personal growth which allows them to take on the gatekeeper identity. Counselor educators can support doctoral-level students as they navigate these experiences. Faculty members can do this through education, mentorship, and fostering a program culture which supports gatekeeping. Programs can create and support a culture of accountability, through gatekeeping. This can be facilitated by incorporating gatekeeping throughout the curriculum. Doctoral-level students are not passive learners. However, CES programs need to require that doctoral-level students develop an understanding of their program’s gatekeeping policies, and develop a gatekeeper identity through coursework, assignments, and experiential learning activities. Responses from the sample suggest that doctoral-level students need to be trained, supported, and frequently reminded of gatekeeping roles and responsibilities. From the data, gatekeeping needs to be emphasized by program and faculty for doctoral-level students to develop competency, fulfill their responsibilities, and feel supported in doing so.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

To: Evan C Smaiaisky  
   BELL 4188
From: Douglas James Adams, Chair  
       IRB Committee
Date: 02/18/2020
Action: Expedited Approval
Action Date: 02/18/2020
Protocol #: 200142291
Study Title: Doctoral Students Experience Adopting Gatekeeping Roles and Responsibilities within Counselor Education
Expiration Date: 01/30/2021
Last Approval Date:

The above referenced protocol has been approved following expedited review by the IRB Committee that oversees research with human subjects.

If the research involves collaboration with another institution then the research cannot commence until the Committee receives written notification of approval from the collaborating institution’s IRB.

It is the Principal Investigator’s responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without Committee approval. Please submit continuation requests early enough to allow sufficient time for review. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in the automatic suspension of the approval of this protocol. Information collected following suspension is unapproved research and cannot be reported or published as research data. If you do not wish continued approval, please notify the Committee of the study closure.

Adverse Events: Any serious or unexpected adverse event must be reported to the IRB Committee within 48 hours. All other adverse events should be reported within 10 working days.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, study personnel, or number of participants, please submit an amendment to the IRB. All changes must be approved by the IRB Committee before they can be initiated.

You must maintain a research file for at least 3 years after completion of the study. This file should include all correspondence with the IRB Committee, original signed consent forms, and study data.

cc: Erin Kern Popejoy, Investigator
Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Hello,

My name is Evan Smarinsky, a Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral candidate at The University of Arkansas, and I am advised by Dr. Erin Popejoy. I am conducting my doctoral dissertation study on counselor education doctoral-level students’ experiences as gatekeepers during their doctoral training. I am emailing you to solicit your help in recruiting students from your program who may be eligible to participate in this research. This qualitative study seeks to understand how doctoral-level supervisors experience the gatekeeping phenomenon. My goal is to help make the gatekeeper role of the doctoral-level student more visible and understood. This may illuminate qualities which are pertinent to the training of both doctoral-level supervisors and master level counseling students. This study has been approved by The University of Arkansas Human Subjects Institutional Review Board.

Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral-level students/candidates enrolled in CACREP programs across the US who have completed supervision training and have had supervision experiences which required gatekeeping roles and responsibilities are invited to participate. Participants who complete the study will be provided with a 25-dollar Amazon gift card. Informed consent and a brief demographic survey will be provided online through Qualtrics.

After completing the consent form and providing demographic information, participants will be contacted via email. Participants will be asked to complete a brief journaling assignment, and two semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 45-60 minutes, as well as a short follow-up interview for clarification purposes and to confirm accuracy of data. Interviews will take place in person or via phone or video call per geographical location and interviewee preference. All interviews will be audio recorded. In order to preserve the confidentiality of all participants all identifying information will be removed, and the recordings will be destroyed promptly after transcribing.

Participants may withdraw participation from the study at any time, and withdrawal from study may result in ineligibility for study compensation benefits. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Evan Smarinsky via email at ecsmarin@uark.edu. You may also contact my advisor Dr. Erin Popejoy at erinkern@uark.edu. Thank you for your time and interest.
Appendix C: Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form for Participation
Doctoral Students Experience Adopting Gatekeeping Roles and Responsibilities within Counselor Education

Investigators:
Evan Smarinsky, LPC, M.S.  
Erie Pepoejoy, Ph.D., LPC  
Principal Investigator  
Dissertation Chair  
Doctoral Candidate  
Assistant Professor  
Counselor Education and Supervision  
Counselor Education and Supervision  
Email: evsmarinsky@uark.edu  
Email: erinpepoejoy@uark.edu

Before agreeing to participate in this study from the Counselor Education program at the University of Arkansas, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose of this research project.

Description: You are being asked to provide demographic data, a copy of gatekeeping policies at your program, complete a brief critical incident writing assignment, and participate in two interviews. Additionally, you are being asked to allow a researcher from the Counselor Education program at the University of Arkansas to review, analyze, and report findings related to your writing as well as transcripts from the interviews. In the interviews and critical incident writing assignment you will be asked reflect on your experiences with gatekeeping as a doctoral supervisor. The research will be led by Evan Smarinsky’s doctoral candidate as a doctoral dissertation study. This study seeks to understand how doctoral supervisors experience the gatekeeping phenomenon. This study plans to examine the journals entries, and interview transcripts for key points of learning and themes related to each student’s experience.

Risks and Benefits: There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study. Benefits include learning about how you experienced adopting the gatekeeping role, and developed your gatekeeping identity.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate or to stop your participation at any time during the study without any consequences or repercussions.

Confidentiality: All identifying information will be removed from journal and transcripts before they are analyzed by the researcher in order to protect confidentiality. All information will be kept anonymous by using a confidential coding system and all information collected will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy.

Informed Consent: I have read the description, including the purpose of the study, the procedures to be used, the potential risks, the confidentiality as well as the option to withdraw from the study at any time, and I believe that I understand what is involved.

Questions: If you have questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Evan Smarinsky at (479) 575-6808 or by e-mail at ecmarin@uark.edu as well as Dr. Pepoejoy by email at erinpepoejoy@uark.edu. For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ri Windmiller, the University’s IRB Coordinator, at (479) 575-2306 or by e-mail at irb@uark.edu.

Participants’ Rights: Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- You understand that you do not have to participate, and can choose to withdraw from the study at any point.
- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant  
Date

IRB#: 20012-0291  APPROVED: 18 Feb 2010  EXP: 30 Jan 2021

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Appendix D: Demographic Survey

Please fill in the following information about you and your program

1. Gender:
   a. Female
   b. Male
   c. Other/Non-Binary
   d. Prefer not to answer

2. Age:

3. Ethnicity:
   a. White
   b. Black or African American
   c. Hispanic or Latino
   d. American Indian or Alaska Native
   e. Asian
   f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   g. Other: (Specify)

4. Education (check all that apply): Completed Supervision Training ___
   Doctoral-level student ____  Doctoral Candidate ______

5. Please briefly describe your clinical experience prior to your doctoral training:

6. Please indicate the counseling theory or theories you utilize:
7. Please indicate the length of your supervision experience, and approximate number of supervisees you have supervised, including current supervisees: (Add example answer?)

8. Please describe the supervision model/theory you utilize:

9. Types of counseling programs offered in your program. Check all that apply:
   a. School
   b. Clinical Mental Health/Community Counseling
   c. Rehabilitation Counseling
   d. Other (please specify)

10. What is the approximate number of faculty within in your program?

11. Can you provide materials related to gatekeeping policies and procedures which your institution utilizes?
   a. Yes
   b. No
Appendix E: Critical Incident Writing Prompt

Critical Incident Journal Writing Prompt:

Thank you for agreeing to participate please respond to the following four writing prompts. In order to ensure confidentiality of the participants, all identifying information will be removed

1) Please describe a critical gatekeeping experience you had as a doctoral-level supervisor. You can mention more than one. Please answer in detail:

2) What are some key factors affecting your experiences as a doctoral-level supervisor?

3) What did you learn about yourself and your program as a result of these experiences?

4) How did these experiences impact or shape your views towards supervision and counselor education?
Appendix F: Semi-structure Interview Protocol

Semi structure interview, responses will guide additional questions. The goal is to gain the participants understanding of both the what, and how of the gatekeeping phenomenon.

1. Describe in detail your gatekeeping experiences as a doctoral-level supervisor.
2. Describe and define you perception of gatekeeping.
3. What was your awareness of the gatekeeping and remediation processes at you program/institute?
4. What are some key factors affecting you experiences as a doctoral-level supervisor?
5. Describe how interpersonal factors played a role during these experiences.
6. Describe how intrapersonal factors played a role during these experiences.
7. What would you describe as supports in developing a gatekeeper identity?
8. What would you describe as barriers in developing a gatekeeper identity?
9. Describe the parts of the gatekeeping process which are more challenging for you.
10. Things you find that are more difficult to do in this role?
11. Things you find that easier for you do in this role?
12. What did you learn about yourself as a result of these experiences?
13. How did these experiences impact or shape your views towards supervision?
14. How will these experiences impact you as a future counselor educator?
15. What would you like to change or recommend as a result of these experiences?
Appendix G: Second Interview Protocol

1) Describe how the gatekeeping role was introduced to you.

2) At what point(s) during a counseling program do you believe gatekeeping most commonly occurs?

3) How well do you feel the profession and your program gatekeep students?

4) How well do you feel your program prepared you for the gatekeeper role?

5) How did faculty members act as supports or barriers when you brought up gatekeeping concerns regarding students?

6) How do multicultural concerns relate to gatekeeping? How did your identity in regard to ethnicity, sex, orientation affect your gatekeeping experiences?

7) Have you had any experience with gatekeeping outside of your current program and how have those experiences been similar or different?
8) In your gatekeeping experiences what types of supervisee’s concerns were most likely to initiate gatekeeping processes?

9) Describe how supervisees’ personality traits influenced the gatekeeping process, including gatekeeping outcomes?

10) Describe supervisee personality traits that support the gatekeeping process and personality traits that act as barriers.
Appendix H: Example of Researcher Memo

Reflexivity memo #1
2/23/2020

I am completing this memo prior to my interviews, three of which have been scheduled and will begin next week. I am feeling a little nervous and excited in approaching these interviews. These interviews will involve several folks I have not met, and I have no idea how they will respond to my questions. My biggest concern is balance, I need to maintain my role of interviewer, and fidelity to the interview protocol. However, I also need to establish rapport, and let the interview guide some follow up questions. I think it may be tempting to revert to a counselor role, self-disclose, or begin to share literature. I assume what the interviewee’s say will probably align with my assumptions, and what literature done on faculty has shown. So, I will work to attempt to not guide or direct the interviewee’s.
Appendix I: Examples of Potential Assignments & Program Feedback Forms

Examples of potential writing assignments, prompts and experiential learning activities

Please review the gatekeeping policies and procedures of the program in order to respond to the following:

- What steps or policies surprise you?
- Are there any you need clarification on?
- Do you see any policies or procedures as potentially challenging to uphold?
- Are there any which you disagree with?

Research has shown students exhibiting problems of professional competence (PPC) are common. As a doctoral-level student, you may encounter supervisees or students exhibiting a PPC. Often PPCs are related to dispositional factors such as receptivity to feedback, a lack of multicultural competency, unprofessional, and unethical behavior. Please describe how you would respond to the following scenario utilizing your supervision model, and teaching philosophy. Please include how theory would inform your response, identity which CACREP and ACA standards may be relevant, identify which steps you would take according programs gatekeeping policies. Describe how this might impact you emotionally and professionally.

- What do think would be the most challenging part of this, how your personality would be a factor, and how might you access faculty for support. Have you had any experiences like this?
- If so, describe the experience and what you learned as a result.

Research shows supervisor and supervisee identity influence the supervision process, the supervision relationship, and is important during experiences of gatekeeping and fulfilling the evaluative responsibilities. Discuss how your identity might impact you as a gatekeeper, and counselor educator.

- How will you respond to multicultural issues, and students with different identities?
- What do you think would be good steps, or processes to improve these processes?
- What information or skills would you want to provide?
- Which skills and knowledge do you need to develop?

Please respond to the following. Your responses will not be used for grading purposes, will be kept anonymous, and are intended to help improve the program. How would you describe gatekeeping in the program?
• Describe how the program and faculty support or act as barriers for gatekeeping.
• Describe how gatekeeping is addressed in your supervision.
• Are you satisfied with the support faculty provide?
• What recommendations do you have?

Describe how you need to grow professionally and personally in order to fulfill gatekeeping roles and responsibilities.

• What can faculty or the program do to facilitate this growth?
• What steps do you need to take, and how will you facilitate this growth?

The following are fictional gatekeeping scenarios which have been informed by past experiences within the program. In the following scenarios, take turns in the gatekeeper role and student role. Discuss your experience with your partner.

• How did you feel in each role?
• What does this say about your knowledge of gatekeeping and your personality?
• What feedback or suggestions could you provide to your partner?
• Is there anything your faculty or classmates could suggest or provide?