FEMINIST MENTORSHIP: WOMEN LEADING MEN IN COUNSELOR EDUCATION

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Erin Rachel Hagen

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Feminist Mentorship: Women Leading Men in Counselor Education

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Erin Rachel Hagen

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SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

Dr. Brenda Hall
Chair

Dr. James Korcuska

Dr. Jodi Tangen

Dr. Ann Burnett

Approved:

4.22.2021
Date

Dr. Brenda Hall
Department Chair

ABSTRACT

This Interpretative Phenomenological Study was initiated to explore the lived experiences of mentorship pairs in counselor education doctoral studies. The research question guiding this study was: what are the qualities of the mentoring relationship between female, cisgender, feminist-oriented counselor education mentors and their male cisgender traditionally-oriented doctoral counselor education mentees? This pair was identified for exploration by noting a gap in mentorship literature that recognizes the unique relational qualities and mentorship outcomes with cross-gender pairs, and the specific influence of feminist orientation on male mentees and the mentorship process.

Cross-gender mentorship is addressed in literature but dominantly refers to men as mentors to women (Casto et al., 2005; Jacobi, 1991). This could sustain a tradition in which men are more likely to be mentored by men and thus more apt to perpetuate under-examined hegemonic masculinity norms (*APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men*, 2018). It also leaves cross-gender relationships under-examined and open to unhelpful biases attributed to heteronormative dynamics assuming an inability for women and men to connect or that connection is based on attraction rather than professional endeavors (Brown et al., 2009; Harden et al., 2009; Johnson, 2002; Schwiebert et al., 1999).

Three cross-gender pairs were interviewed individually to discuss their lived experiences with feminist cross-gender mentorship. Data analysis guidelines for mutiperspectival research designs was used, completing individual case studies of the participant transcripts before moving to analysis of the pairs and then across pairs (Larkin et al., 2019). An IPA research design was chosen as complementary to feminist research in that it has potential to extrapolate rich detailed accounts of participant experiences that creates potential for systemic social change.

Themes identified in this study include: an evolution of the mentorship relationship, leveling the unnecessary hierarchy, and expecting the unexpected: surprising elements and outcomes. This study confirms previous findings of feminist mentorship as "just good mentorship in practice" (Humble et al., 2006 p. 5) and fills the wide gap in understanding the importance of cross-gender mentorship for male mentees in counselor education.

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I would like to acknowledge my mentors, many individuals that made huge impressions in small moments. These people inspired me to trust myself to know myself deeply. They also made me think about all of the people that could be missing out if they weren't to know mentorship the way I had experienced it. I know mentorship as a process of trust, not just in our mentors, in ourselves. When we know ourselves, trust ourselves, we are capable of so much.

My very first mentor, Tina Olson, told me we would learn from each other, I had no idea how true that would be. How lucky I was to be chosen by you.

To Dr. Hall, my mentor, advisor, and committee chair, I have looked up to you and felt honored to be able to rise to your challenges.

To Dr. Korcuska, who as a male mentor made me realize how inspiring and creative cross-gender relationships can be when two people cheer each other on and unlock new processes of knowing.

To my mom who poured her soul into being a parent and grandparent and who taught me depths of admiration and strength.

To all of my favorite writers- academic and otherwise, who have held me in moments I could have tapped out hard.

Maybe most of all, to all the uncompromising women who made history only by voicing the fact, women deserve to access and to influence every system that exists, just the same as any other. Thank you.

DEDICATION

This dissertation was a thing of fantasies for me, as a first-generation graduate student. I did not know until much later in this journey how much harder it was for me since I could not turn to my family to understand what I was struggling with or how to get past it. Once I recognized that academic mentorship from faculty and peers would get me through it, it was easier to see all the things my family had done to bring me to that point.

This work is dedicated to my Mom, who we lost before I could finish writing. Her brave battle gave me courage and stamina.

This work is dedicated to my Dad. His influence on my imagination, vocabulary, and sense of humor was the thing that helped me bring it to life.

This work is dedicated to my partner. His logic grounded me, and his drive inspired me to work harder, to keep pushing.

This work is dedicated to my ‘sisters’ for feeding me, building context, curiosity, adventure and pride in the process.

Finally, this work is dedicated to my daughters. They are my most surprising and cherished mentors.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACES	Association of Counselor Education and Supervision.
APA	American Psychological Association
CACREP	Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs
CES	Counselor Education and Supervision
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
JMCD	Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development
Qual	Qualitative research
Quant	Quantitative research
RCT	Relational Cultural Theory
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce readers to the rationale, context, and theoretical framework used to develop this study. Additionally, an introduction to the study design and research questions is given, along with definitions for important terms used throughout this dissertation.

Context for the Study

Supporting the success of students and new professionals through mentorship has long been a topic of interest (Curtin et al., 2016; Jacobi, 1991; Johnson, 2002; Kram, 1983). Mentorship, or the pairing of individuals with more knowledge or experience with those with less knowledge or experience across all fields of education, business, and psychology has been an accessible and consistent vehicle to student success. Though there are drastic differences in operational definitions, process variables, and outcomes (Jacobi, 1991), much of the academic mentorship literature points to the utility of mentorship for students (Black et al., 2004; Borders et al., 2012; Curtin et al., 2016; Maccombs & Bhat, 2020).

The traditional mentorship relationship is focused on a male mentor and either a male or female protégé where the objective of the relationship is to train the protégé to achieve in a similar way to their mentor (Dreher & Cox, 1996). From early literature, recommendations for same gender and same race or ethnicity pairs predominated (Jacobi, 1991; Johnson, 2002). In academia, there is a scarcity of resources to meet this specific demand. Additionally, that recommendation was not supported by adequate empirical evidence. Therefore, efforts toward developing mentorship models that focus on cross-gender and cross-cultural competencies have been created (Harden et al., 2009; Walker, 2006).

Recent literature has placed focus on academic mentorship that has different but equal benefits for mentors and mentees (Alvarez & Lazzari, 2016; Curtin et al., 2016; Purgason et al., 2018), as well as mentorship models that increase success for populations who are typically marginalized in academia and the workplace, namely women and people of color (Harden et al., 2009).

Within counselor education, mentorship has gained momentum as a consistent means of graduate student success (Black et al., 2004; Briggs & Pehrsson, 2008; Casto et al., 2005; Okech et al., 2006; Purgason et al., 2016, 2018). In 2012, Borders and colleagues published mentorship guidelines to streamline the effective use of mentorship for master's and doctoral students in counselor education. The authors recommended increasing functionality of mentorship by expanding awareness and compatibility through consideration of mentorship ability with new hires, providing mentorship resources and training, expanding mentorship networks, and gearing mentorship focus to fit departmental missions. Having mentorship frameworks to draw from would increase the consistency of mentorship among all counselor education programs.

Furthermore, very few specific frameworks for mentorship in counselor education exist, and empirical study of mentorship is scarce. Feminist mentorship is a framework rooted in the fundamental values and tenets of feminism that seek to build systems of equality and advance social change by disrupting systems of inequality. Feminist mentorship is focused on transparency and self-disclosure, analysis of power and power sharing, demystification of processes, and improving systems to create positive social change and equality for all people (Humble et al., 2006).

Existing frameworks for mentorship in counselor education have already pinpointed relational cultural theory (RCT), a derivative of feminism, as an appropriate mentorship model

(Walker, 2006). The tenets of RCT include mutuality, openness, authenticity, and zest (Alvarez & Lazzari, 2016). Although these tenets are a logical fit for what we believe mentorship should include, RCT is not an empirically established theory with distinguished foundational structure and elements. Without further empirical analysis, understanding of the qualities and outcomes of the mentorship relationship or of goodness of fit for specific mentoring frameworks in counselor education is limited and anecdotal (Black et al., 2004).

The first step in establishing models of mentorship is inquiry into the characteristics that distinguish and uphold the major goals of the field. This study addresses mentorship from a feminist perspective specifically in counselor education. The findings may indicate broader implications for how to strengthen and grow mentoring practices in counselor education.

Statement of the Problem

The major problem of existing research on the topic of mentorship in education is the untenable gap in information on females leading males and how this impacts individuals and the fields of education, counselor education, and mental health. Furthermore, few models for mentorship have been established for recommendation.

To this point, there is very little known about the mentoring relationship between female mentors and male mentees as it is missing from the literature base across academia. Many hypotheses can be formed as to why this particular area has not been a research focus; this study is focused on cultural elements that may be influencing the gap.

The field of counselor education has historically consisted of student cohorts that are predominantly female. Male counseling students make up, on average, around 17% -23% of the student population (CACREP, 2017). It is curious then, that male faculty make up around 40% of all counselor education departments (CACREP, 2017). The preceding statistic is generous given

that across all areas of higher education, women make up only around 32% of faculty (Maccombs & Bhat, 2020). Based on the existing recommendation that same-sex mentorship pairs are most advantageous, it is likely that the few male counseling students entering the field will be paired with male faculty.

From seminal work on mentorship (Jacobi, 1991; Kram, 1985) and from comprehensive review of mentorship literature in higher education (Crisp & Cruz, 2009), we know widely-used operational definitions for mentorship have not been established, but there is agreement that mentorship aspects should include a focus on growth of the mentee. In a 1991 literature review, Jacobi reiterated this point and condensed the popularly reported functions of the mentor role to 15 distinct functions that covered three major areas: career advancement, psychological support and role modeling. Several times within this literature review, the dynamics of the mentoring relationship are referred to as paternalistic. Any mention of cross-gendered mentorship studies also primarily indicate a male mentor with a female mentee (Jacobi, 1991). However, when discussing the ideal qualities of a mentor for developmental support, references are made to models of development that are female oriented (Perry, 1970).

In contrast, feminist mentorship is focused on the process by which mentors provide transparency, autonomy, and the invocation of personal power to achieve unique status and ability that is rooted in one's authentic journey (Alvarez & Lazzari, 2016; Benishek et al., 2004; Prouty Lyness & Helmeke, 2008; Smith-Adcock et al., 2004). Additionally, models of feminist research and supervision highlight the unique position of feminism to bring multicultural issues to the surface of the relationship and allow for deep analyses of power dynamics and potential for meaningful change (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017; Purgason et al., 2018; Silver et al., 2019).

Furthermore, multicultural competency has become an imperative rather than an ideal in the field of counselor education and supervision, guided by the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competency (MSJCC) guidelines (Ratts et al., 2016). "Multiculturalism" in its most absolute form refers to the many expressions and intersections of how personal identity is constructed including gender, along with race, ethnicity, economic status, religion, ability status, and other cultural factors (Ratts et al., 2016). In addition to guidelines for upholding the mental health field objectives, development of multicultural competency in counselor education is rooted in all aspects of the learning process from the classroom to research mentorship. Therefore, focusing on gender as a multicultural construct embedded in the relationship of cross-gender mentorship pairs could offer particularly salient information.

Jacobi (1991) refers to the "folk wisdom" of mentorship assuming that same-sex pairs have the most to gain from partnering at the cost of missing what cross-gender pairs have uniquely to offer. A gap exists in the literature to explore the unique qualities that female mentors provide, not just for female mentees, but for all mentees. Given the specific values that feminists hold, female feminists are likely poised to expand male mentees perspective and potential for positive outcomes for the mentee, institutions, and systems.

Purpose of the Study

In order to reach gender equity in terms of influence, representation of female leaders will likely need to be emphasized. There continues to be an over-representation of males in positional leadership in counselor education (CACREP, 2017). Encouragement for same-gender mentorship for male counselor education doctoral students could mean that problems related to traditional or toxic masculinity could continue unaddressed in the counseling field (*APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men*, 2018), women will continue to have

fewer opportunities for quality mentorship, and we will not see the full breadth of what women can provide in leadership and mentorship positions.

At the time of writing, no studies existed to examine the unique cultural aspects of cross-gender mentorship led by female mentors at the doctoral level. Additionally, no literature exists on this topic across fields such as nursing or education wherein the relationship is also used as an important variable for learning and growth.

Counselor education is a field committed to both the human condition and inclusivity of all humans. The variables that influence the work we do are endless, so we continue to explore ideal conditions that promote growth, mental health, and inclusivity at the client, supervisee, student, and leadership levels. The true benefit to the field of counseling lies in increasing multicultural humility and influencing meaningful change. Through this study, we begin to answer the question: What are the distinct qualities of female feminist-led doctoral mentorship experiences? And is this unique and historically unlikely pair an important addition to the growth of counselor education as a whole?

Theoretical Framework

Feminist research was the theoretical structure used to design and implement the study. Feminist research privileges or centers the voices of those who have experienced the phenomenon. This privileged position allows a deep analysis of power and oppressive internal and external structures that affect an individual's ability to navigate their world as well as influence others (Fassinger, 2004).

Feminism is an important theoretical fit for this research because females have not been at the center of the discussion around mentorship, and thus we are missing valuable information about their perspective and unique contributions. Additionally, feminism emphasizes the

importance of equality and analysis of power dynamics in relationships and systems. This research study is concerned with filling the research gap that analyzes successful cross-gender professional pairings that are led by women and thus equalized in power and privilege.

Research Design

This research was focused on exploring the unique aspects of the mentorship relationship between female feminist mentors and their traditional male mentees. Feminist theory upholds the idea that we should privilege the voices of the marginalized or oppressed. Qualitative research in its philosophy is suited to exploring, articulating, and in some cases, influencing the lives of its participants (Hayes & Singh, 2012). Qualitative research utilizes an inductive method of inquiry, spotlighting the voices of those with lived experience with a certain phenomenon. Specifically, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as the research modality to provide an in-depth analysis of the relational qualities between females and males, broadly, and more specifically, between feminist females and non-feminist or "traditional" males.

Research Questions

The major questions guiding this study were geared at understanding the unique relational qualities of an unexamined pairing. The guiding research question was: What are the qualities of the mentoring relationship between female, cisgender, feminist-oriented counselor education mentors and their male cisgender traditionally-oriented doctoral counselor education mentees?

Sub-questions served to further extrapolate the distinctions in this relationship and qualities that held important implications for the field of counselor education. Sub-questions in this study were as follows: (a) What are the unique contributions of feminist mentors for future male counselor educators? (b) How do the qualities of the feminist mentorship relationship differ

or resemble traditional mentorship for male mentees? and (c) What unique qualities does feminist mentoring offer the field of counselor education?

Use of Language

Language was carefully considered throughout the research design process, data collection and analysis, and writing processes. The use of the term feminist rather than womanist or black feminist is purposeful and indicates this sample did not include women of color. All mentors identified as feminist and discussed their personal philosophy related to feminism, which had similarities and differences. At its origin, the feminist movement was initiated by and for white women to gain equality with white men. Throughout the maturity of the movement, both the term feminist and its mission have expanded to include equality for all women and the acknowledgement of past harms to women of color. This is an important distinction that indicates privilege (known and unknown).

Definition of Terms

Mentorship- There is no agreement on a universal definition of mentorship across fields or even within the fields of education or counselor education. For the purpose of this study, I am utilizing a broad definition of a more knowledgeable or experienced person working intentionally with and for growth and development of a less knowledgeable or experienced person.

Feminist Mentorship- As defined by Harway (2001), "A mentoring relationship characterized by mutuality, respect, collaboration, awareness of power relationships and giving voice to the mentee" (p. 743).

Feminist- Many definitions, formal and informal exist for what qualifies as feminist. Feminist here refers to a process, person, or theory that values equality among all and

demonstrates a commitment to the evaluation of power constructs and creating social change by centering the voices of those individuals and groups who are oppressed while imploring groups with privilege to advocate for power sharing. Feminist theory in research recognizes the historical exclusion of females from research and the importance of organizing research to understand gender constructs and change harmful societal norms (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Traditional Male- Traditional maleness is defined in cultural terms. Here, I refer to a male who was acculturated to a position of privilege based on gender. By virtue of this position, a traditional male is less likely to have awareness around privilege in relationships or question positions of power. This is further explained by concepts of hegemonic masculinity or the core ideal of masculinity as dominant, competitive, and egocentric (Kimmel & Wade, 2018). There is an assumption that all men are in a way "traditional" or influenced my hegemonic maleness until they have questioned their values, position of privilege, and their use of power.

Research Mentorship- This study is specifically concerned with research mentorship which would most likely take place at the doctoral level of education. Many studies have focused on mentorship at the undergraduate or professional level. At the doctoral level, mentorship will have an emphasis on research design and implementation that calls for advanced thinking and planning as well as a high level of both independence and collaboration.

Counselor Education Mentorship- There are five levels of focus within the field of counselor education: research, supervision of professional counselors, advanced clinical practice, advocacy, and leadership. Mentorship within counselor education would emphasize high level development in each of these five areas.

Organization of the Document

This paper begins with an introduction to the topic of study: feminist females mentoring traditional males in counselor education. An overview of the history of the topic is provided as well as a statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. Additionally, an introduction to the specific research questions and research design was presented in chapter one.

In chapter two, I will provide a review of the existing literature on the topics of mentorship, feminist mentorship, and mentorship in counselor education. I will specifically highlight gaps in information that will be addressed in the current study. Chapter two also details the theoretical framework for the study.

In chapter three, I will explain the research methodology, research process, and any theoretical underpinnings that are essential to understanding the data collection or analysis and will provide context to the findings.

Then, in chapter four, I will provide a summary of the data analysis findings, along with detailed accounts from participants on their lived experience with mentorship.

Finally, chapter five will discuss the findings in light of previous literature, as well as implications for the field of counselor education. Additionally, I will discuss limitations to the current inquiry and directions for future implementation and research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to outline recent and seminal literature that examines mentorship trends and implications, mentorship in counselor education, the mentorship relationship, and feminist mentorship. Mentorship literature was examined and critiqued in order to highlight gaps that exist in our understanding of the unique qualities of feminist mentorship and the potential benefit to male counselor educators and the counselor education field as a whole.

Literature Search

A scoping review of literature was completed by searching the databases Education Source, Psych Articles, and PsycINFO. The primary search terms used were "mentoring" AND "counselor education." Additional search terms used included: gender, feminism, mentorship, feminist mentorship, men as feminists, and men AND mentorship AND feminist. Multiple searches were conducted throughout the literature review process to catch recent publications that may highlight mentorship trends and to search in depth topics relevant to understanding the evolution and meaningful progressions of mentorship in counselor education.

Mentorship

Forms of mentorship have likely been commonplace since the beginning of human existence with shifts in large-scale attention during the industrial era to accommodate the processes of mass production (Fassinger & Hensler McGinnis, 2005). Our conventional understanding of mentorship comes from early folklore- Homer teaching Odysseus' son in the Odyssey (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Fassinger & Hensler McGinnis, 2005). The root of the word mentor-'tor' is "man who thinks" and the Latin word for protégé (protegere) is 'to protect' (Fassinger & Hensler McGinnis, 2005, p. 144).

There is little agreement in seminal mentorship literature on the operational definitions, characteristics, and outcomes of traditional mentorship (Jacobi, 1991). In a comprehensive review of the literature, Crisp & Cruz (2009) found over 50 varying definitions of the term. Inability to define the phenomenon may be problematic, in that empirical rigor is limited by knowledge of variables. There is some agreement on two major roles of mentorship: career and psychosocial development (Kram, 1985) and outcomes of mentorship, which include higher salary (Dreher & Cox, 1996), a higher degree of career success, and satisfaction with educational and career experiences for both the mentor and mentee (Brown et al., 2009; Johnson, 2002). Another agreement across mentorship literature is that the general focus of mentorship should be on the mentee's growth (Borders et al., 2012; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991; Johnson, 2002; Kram, 1983).

Outcomes of mentorship are positive, which is indicated by the wide degree of attention paid to the topic. There is a significant pass-down function in mentorship- overwhelmingly, those who are mentored are more satisfied in their academic and professional experience and are more likely to mentor others (Johnson, 2002). Outcomes measured by financial success or upward mobility are greater for men than for women (Dreher & Cox, 1996). It may also be important to consider mentorship match as an important variable in understanding successful outcomes as well as the fact that mentoring may only be helpful when conducted by qualified mentors (Crisp & Cruz, 2009).

Mentorship in Higher Education

Across all academic fields, mentoring is typically provided by and for individuals that belong to groups that hold more power and influence in larger systems, namely white men (Dreher & Cox, 1996; Fassinger & Hensler McGinnis, 2005; Johnson, 2002, Whalen et al.,

2004). The typical mentorship relationship is represented as a white male mentor who provides knowledge, interpersonal connections, and guidance for other white males and females who currently hold less knowledge, power, and influence and are on a journey to become similar in status and ability (Dreher & Cox, 1996; Jacobi, 1991; Johnson, 2002). Dreher & Cox (1996) studied a group of Master of Business Administration graduates, finding that higher salary for white male mentees was correlated with the instrumental part of mentorship, which includes networking mentees to powerful colleagues. This finding may underscore the maintenance of status quo for mentorship of males with financial gain as a benefit to males but the cost to others being less visible. Much of the literature focuses on variables of mentorship that are male-influenced and use paternalistic language such as protection, influence, and sponsorship (Curtin et al., 2016; Jacobi, 1991; Johnson, 2002).

Men are more likely to seek and to be assigned a mentor due to the cultural normality of the male mentorship role (Welton et al., 2014). This appears to have cultural implications inside of academia and society for the importance assigned to men. Studies indicate that female and minority students have greater difficulty finding informal mentors and may have heightened need for mentorship due to oppressive system dynamics (Jacobi, 1991). Additionally, many articles recommend same sex/ethnicity matches for females and minorities (Jacobi, 1991). The professional outcomes are as high for men who have not been mentored as they are for women who have. This may indicate that mentorship is not the most important defining feature of professional success.

Curtin and colleauges (2016) studied mentorship in doctoral STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and non-STEM programs and expanded Kram's (1985) earlier theory on types of mentorship tasks by identifying three major tasks:

career/instrumental, psychosocial, and sponsorship. Career and instrumental referred to the mentee learning the roles specific to their career such as research and writing, psychosocial referred to personal support tasks, and sponsorship referred to networking or endorsing the mentee to powerful others. They found that by gender and race, sponsorship matters least to non-underrepresented males and more to every other group. They discuss differences in mentorship resulting from cultural norms in groups, academia, field, department, etc. They found that women and minority students have equal interest and less representation in academia, which begs the question of what social change models could provide in terms of systems adjustments.

Functions and Roles

Mentorship is a specific professional role often adopted by necessity and without specific training or competencies (Johnson, 2002). In their seminal conceptual article on the act of intentional mentorship, Johnson (2002) recommends explicit expectations around the form and function of the relationship. Several studies outline qualities of effective mentorship (Brown et al., 2009; Johnson, 2002; Sanzero Eller et al., 2014). A qualified mentor will be kind, healthy, and competent in their field and will have high expectations, transparent communication, and will be prone to sharing power (Johnson, 2002). In the field of nursing, open communication, clear expectations, passion, inspiration, a caring relationship, mutuality, the exchange of knowledge, independence and collaboration, and role modeling through transparency were established as elements of effective mentorship (Sanzero Eller et al., 2014).

Role of the Mentor. The major roles of the mentor are career and psychosocially oriented (Kram, 1985). Career tasks may include sponsorship, coaching, and providing challenging assignments (Johnson, 2002; Kram, 1985). Psychosocial tasks may include role

modeling, acceptance, counseling and enhancement of mentee competence and professional identity (Johnson, 2002; Kram, 1985).

Role of the Mentee. Mentees are likely chosen by their mentors based on compatibility with research or career interests and because of specific characteristics of drive, loyalty, or success potential (Johnson, 2002). Mentee roles in traditional mentorship include assistance on mentor projects, taking necessary feedback, and demonstrating excellent communication and motivation for learning (Johnson, 2002).

Mentorship Limitations

The major known limitations to mentorship in its traditional form are availability and consistency. While same-gender mentorship is the dominant recommendation, women are outnumbered by men in academic faculty positions across all fields of education (Brown et al., 2009; Curtin et al., 2016; Harden et al., 2009; Johnson, 2002). This means that mentorship is not a given for all students and new professionals in education and career environments. Exploration and overhaul could expand training and emphasis in systems on effective mentorship practices.

Cross-Gender Mentorship

There is adequate literature devoted to the topic of cross-gender mentorship as a means of availability (Casto et al., 2005; Doughty & Leddick, 2007; Harden et al., 2009; Johnson & Huwe, 2002; Kram, 1983; Schwiebert et al., 1999; Walker, 2006). Many of these sources warn against the dangers or complications of cross-gender mentorship as sexual attraction (Harden et al., 2009; Johnson & Huwe, 2002; Schwiebert et al., 1999) and cultural differences that reduce compatibility (Doughty & Leddick, 2007).

Women Mentoring Men. When referring to cross-gender relationships, all available literature addresses male mentors with female mentees. With the exception of one peer-reviewed

article (MacKinnon et al., 2011), empirical exploration of cross-gender mentorship with female mentors and male mentees does not exist to the knowledge of the author. Through its absence, it presents as an unwritten rule of academia, business, and psychology. Harden et al., (2009) solidly defines the reason that men are less likely to be mentored by women as rooted in biases about women's lack of power and without emphasis on women's unique strengths. They deduce this is culturally driven and heteronormative and is certainly a learning barrier for males. Mackinnon et al. (2011) give a direct call for further research examining the phenomenology of male supervisees and feminist supervisors, suggesting that men have specific relational insufficiencies and needs that can be met by feminist supervisors.

Mentorship in Counselor Education

Although gaining more current and focused attention, counselor education has been named as underdeveloped in their specific interest in understanding mentorship practice (Black et al., 2004). In response, survey research followed to understand the extent and specific forms and functions that mentorship held in counselor education. In Okech and colleagues (2006) survey research on doctoral research training, they found most research participants (93.7%) agreed mentorship was critical to research training. In this context, mentorship roles may be largely instrumental, however, the participants indicated that the quality of the mentorship relationship was the crucial aspect, as those who had not received necessary mentorship were self-educating (Okech et al., 2006).

Taking a broader focus, Briggs and Pehrsson (2008) conducted a national survey to understand the extent and relevant factors involved in research mentorship in counselor education. They provided an original operational definition of mentorship in counselor education as

> A complex, dynamic relationship that occurs within an academic setting. The mentor, a more experienced researcher, offers both relational and instructional support to the protégé in research generation and collaboration and in professional development. The relationship is goal and task-oriented, and primarily serves the protégé's needs, with secondary benefit for the mentor, who gains a research collaborator (Briggs & Pehrsson, 2008, p. 103).

A relevant question though is, in counselor education, is it important to examine mentorship functions that go beyond research productivity? This indicates a more traditional view of outcomes in academia which excludes the other missions of counselor education such as advanced practice, supervision, advocacy and leadership in the field of mental health and wellness.

Casto and colleagues (2005) led the charge to understanding women's specific roles in counselor education mentorship and offered advice for mentors and mentees to increase the likeliness of success that included a relational focus, transparency, personal empowerment, and autonomy. They advise against cross-gender mentorship as those relationships are likely to be complicated by sexist attitudes. They did not address women mentoring men. This piece appears to bias traditional forms of mentorship: since white men are not choosing women or other marginalized mentees, women mentors are in effect, left over, for women and people of color. It is influenced by the phenomenon that people are attracted to and choose those who are more like them and may keep the field multiculturally disparate.

More recently, Purgason and colleagues (2018) published their Delphi study of counselor education mentors to understand the cohesion of perspectives between mentors and mentees. They established that both mentors and mentees expect similar outcomes from the relationship:

confidence, support, encouragement, and networking connections. However, they noted two distinct limitations to their study. They did not ask mentors to comment on specific differences between masters and doctoral mentorship and give appropriate attention to multicultural considerations creating a gap in understanding. The researchers called for the establishment of concrete mentorship frameworks and tools to be utilized in counselor education and highlighted the importance of transparency, theoretical perspective, and analysis of power and privilege (Purgason et al., 2018).

Briggs & Pehrsson, (2008) found that 59% of counselor education mentees were female and 41% were male, a reflection of the dominant counseling student demographic. However, participant mentors were 40% female and 60% male which highlights the inequities for females moving into faculty positions, perhaps in spite of being mentored. Men in counselor education positions are subject to the same social construction of gender and will be subject to constrictive masculinity norms (Griffith & Cornish, 2018).

Mentorship Standards/Guidelines

In 2009, guidelines for mentorship were adopted by the Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) and outlined for publication (Borders et al., 2012). These guidelines have 2 main areas: characteristics of mentors and characteristics for mentees. While naming the specific guidelines is beyond the scope of this review, there is a focus on feedback between the pair that is constructive, within the expertise of the mentor, ethical, and moves the mentee toward autonomy and mastery. The feedback should be geared toward the communicated needs of the mentee and followed up on by the mentee. Additionally, there is emphasis that the given of mentorship is that the focus is on the mentee's development. They suggest the

relationship is open; explicitly addressing potential conflicts, power dynamics, and cultural differences (Borders et al., 2012).

Existing Mentorship Models. Specific models for doctoral mentorship in counselor education are sparse and mostly conceptual (Purgason et al., 2016; Tentoni, 1995; Walker, 2006). Still, some trends have emerged, as two of the existing models call for RCT (Relational Cultural Theory) influence (Purgason et al., 2016; Walker, 2006). RCT is an intuitive fit for mentorship in counselor education as it focuses on relational elements that are promoted by counseling theory and is highlighted as specifically appropriate for female and minority status students (Purgason et al., 2016). The relational cultural approach is not gender specific and focused on the mentor noting and working with commonalities rather than differences (Walker, 2006). As mentioned previously, RCT as a mentorship model is conceptual, but not empirically validated. There is a need for empirical analysis to validate the effectiveness of all mentorship models in counselor education.

Continuing the trend of evaluating RCT models as a good fit for counselor education, Duffey and colleagues (2016) evaluated the usefulness of developmental relational counseling – in the supervisory relationship. They contend that supervisors that are relationally trained and focused on greater development and health in relationships. When relational development, including healthy negotiation of power and mutuality is fostered in the supervisory relationship, it will flow to other areas of the person's life. This implies that if men are engaged in mentorship which is intentional with power sharing, mutuality, and collaboration, they are more likely to understand relational complexity and bring those qualities into other relationships.

Call for Multicultural Competency. A major demonstration of the call for action on multicultural development in counselor education is evident from a 2004 special issue of the

Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development (JMCD). Fassinger (2004) introduced that special issue with a summary of the goals from the Michigan Conference in 1998 to *1.open dialogue on feminism and multiculturalism 2. Centralize feminist principles in practice, research, and theory 3. Bring together all levels of academics and practitioners 4. To encourage on-going mentorship 5. Produce articles useful to scholars and practitioners (p. 344).*

Much debate has occurred about why feminist practice and multicultural practice have and have not completely diverged as there is a shared goal of these two movements to reshape the psychological field at its most structural level (Reynolds & Constantine, 2004). We have only achieved 1st level change, that is educating on how and why feminist theory is important in the field of counseling. Using mentoring as a vehicle, 2nd level change could be achieved by "intensive, interactive, or experiential interventions for a shift in worldview" (Reynolds & Constantine, 2004, p. 352).

Other important points from the JMCD special issue was highlighting that traditional counseling is created by and for white men but does not consider the unique needs of other groups, often pathologizing them because of their differences (Whalen et al., 2004). In contrast, feminist teaching encourages complex processes of learning, to break away from knowing being limited to one's own worldview and extended to the value of working with and being mentored by people with vast differences (Smith-Adcock et al., 2004). There are categorical differences to multiculturalism, but the overall goal is to tolerate ambiguity and to explore the richness of intersections of identity and knowledge (Enns et al., 2004). Women have a cultural inclination to relationships and there is an ethical challenge to the field to change status quo around individualistic ideology in counseling and move to an individual + social change lens (Whalen et al., 2004).

Cross-Gender Mentorship in Counselor Education. As is typical in the mentorship literature, there is initially an exclusion of the idea of women mentoring men. A single source was identified that mentions the lack of research on the topic (Schwiebert et al., 1999). These authors reiterate that men and women are likely to have male mentors and offer this is in part a function of leadership roles being professionally out of reach for women, historically (Schwiebert et al., 1999). It is noted that men and women tend to take on templated stereotypical and traditional roles with power and process (Schwiebert et al., 1999). This provides a standpoint to understand what happens when no template exists?

Multi-pronged Objectives

Counselor education has not had much critical evaluation of failures in mentorship, an action that would strengthen the profession (Briggs & Pehrsson, 2008). One potential failure in counselor education may be staying complacent in traditional patriarchal systems of teaching and learning, thus limiting empowerment of all persons (Briggs & Pehrsson, 2008). In this complacency, we lose sight of the core values of the field of counselor education.

Women as Leaders in Counselor Education. Black & Magnuson (2005) addressed missing information on women's value in scientific research as a reflection of empirical focus on positional leadership rather than non-positional leadership. They suggest that women are influencers in the field from non-positional leadership roles. The findings of their phenomenological study suggest that women offer unique qualities to mentees and do things that male faculty are unable to do. They discuss that female leaders focus not on individuals, but on widening their circle of influence, perhaps to students, supervisees, and mentees (Black & Magnuson, 2005).

There is a direct call for men and women alike to embrace the relational leadership of feminism (Black & Magnuson, 2005; Levitt, 2010). There are gendered leadership style differences and with counselor education being social justice focused, we must provide space to allow leaders to utilize their personal strengths rather than to change in order to lead (Levitt, 2010). Based on their empirical findings, Black and Magnuson (2005) suggested a new understanding of leadership in that

> …leadership is not a skill set, position, power, or personal acclaim. Leadership is a shared, intergenerational, dynamic activity in which many felt compelled to engage in order to fulfill their mission, vision, or calling. These women raise the level of discourse and accountability. The field of counseling needs more of these individuals (p. 341).

Impacting gender equity in counselor education will likely be accomplished by allowing women to step into leadership positions (Casto et al., 2005; Maccombs & Bhat, 2020). This shift is expected to be met by resistance from ingrained patriarchal beliefs, but will address the multitude of challenges that women face in academia (Maccombs & Bhat, 2020). Echoing earlier models for counselor education mentorship, Maccombs & Bhat (2020) offer a leadership framework that includes an RCT approach and that leads us to believe that feminist tenets and feminist mentorship is an appropriate theoretical fit for mentorship in counselor education.

Feminist Mentorship

Feminist mentoring can be one avenue by which men might enter into the feminist worldview. The word mentoring at its roots means "man who thinks" (Fassinger, 2005, p.144). Protege, the person being mentored, describes a relationship wherein the mentor "protects" the mentee who brings vulnerability to the relationship. From a feminist lens, protection is construed

in a power relationship as mutuality, transparency, and vulnerability rather than an injunction to shield from harm or enforce with command.

Humble and colleagues (2006) sought to discern if feminist mentorship actually had distinct qualities, or if it was "just good mentoring in practice" (p. 5). Operationally stated, feminist mentorship is "a mentorship relationship characterized by mutuality, respect, collaboration, awareness of power relationships and giving voice to the mentee" (Harway, 2001, p. 743). Commonly in Counselor Education, there is a distinction between the functions of supervision. Available literature on 'feminist mentorship' is limited, while wider information exists on 'feminist supervision' of which the function is influencing identity and skills (Humble et al., 2006). For that reason, this section includes information on both feminist mentorship and supervision interchangeably; this is valid and appropriate given that with feminist specific models, these two roles serve identical functions (Prouty Lyness & Helmeke, 2008).

To illustrate the contrast, the nature of traditional mentorship is patriarchal and meant to shape protégés into pre-existing structures, which is outside the mission of feminism. Feminist mentorship is more apt to identify problems with that structure and empower protégés to examine and change limiting aspects of academia and practice (Humble et al., 2006). The feminist agenda seeks equity and change in systems of inequality. This is an additional layer of mentorship for feminist mentors (Humble et al., 2006).

Arczynski and Morrow (2017) completed a grounded theory study to understand the conceptual and practical implementation of feminist multicultural principles in clinical supervision. The framework developed from this study highlighted the unique element of power sharing in the feminist supervisory relationship. Further than a simple concept of understanding power dynamics are present in the relationship, the model articulates the feminist supervisor has

power in their role, understands the complexity of power that comes from statuses, has personal and professional responsibilities to see their supervisee's multiple contexts, and manages the tension of many power-laden values and tasks. These values are carried out in the relationship through self-disclosure, openness, collaboration, flexibility, reflexivity, and focusing and refocusing on context (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017).

Importantly, empowerment is a core objective of the feminist relationship which develops through the process of being vulnerable, with a person of power, while continuing to feel accepted and valued (Degges-White et al., 2013). Through this process students are able to abandon self-stigma as a resistance to their goal-attainment.

Core Tenets

The original feminist mentoring model presented by Fassinger in 1997 included six core elements that echo the core tenets of feminism and feminist pedagogy a) re-thinking power or power sharing with mutuality, respect, equity, and open communication; b) a relational emphasis with importance placed on balancing what is personal and professional to both mentor and mentee and is marked by self-disclosure from the mentor; c) collaboration between mentor and mentee, with others, and perhaps to increase praxis or community involvement; d) focused on diversity and elevating marginalized voices; e) integrates non-dichotomous thinking or building contextual knowledge; f) incorporates political analysis and actively challenges patriarchal values; (as cited in Enns et. al., 2004). Benishek and colleagues (2004) expanded and refined Fassinger's model to incorporate multicultural elements such as examining privilege and oppression, mentors broaching multicultural issues with all mentees, and emphasizing experiences and products created outside of majority culture to elevate the voices of marginalized people (Benishek et al., 2004).

Feminist Mentorship Qualities

The feminist supervision relationship is paradoxical in nature as supervisors and students are aware of the difference of power and objectively seek equalization through multiple power sharing practices (Falender, 2009). This changes the context of accountability in the relationship to setting up clear expectations and boundaries at the outset of the relationship with the goal of increased autonomy and personal empowerment throughout the process (Falender, 2009). Feminist relationships are said to be identified by qualities rather than by a prescribed set of techniques (Degges-White et al., 2013). Feminist supervisors may model a position of not knowing in order to invite the construction of knowledge (Degges-White et al., 2013). In this way, they are modeling how to seek the expertise of others as a way of learning. The feminist supervisor embodies challenge and negotiation to build self-trust in their supervisee (Degges-White et al., 2013).

Qualities of the Feminist Mentor. The mentor qualities identified from mentorship accounts include versatility, integrity, honesty, self-disclosure, authentic and not fake interactions without ulterior motives, using all parts of the self (self-disclosure) to draw out all parts of the mentees self with the goal of transformation (Humble et al., 2006). Unlike the traditional mentorship tasks of showing the ropes to mentees, major tasks of feminist supervisors are providing guidance, managing power, and empowering mentees to professionally self-define (Prouty Lyness & Helmeke, 2008). A specific task of the mentor is to practice reflection or reflexivity in order to model this crucial process skill to students (Falender, 2009).

Benefits to the Mentee. Benefits to the mentee include development of self-congruence, gains in awareness of multicultural issues, and empowerment to work toward social change (Benishek et al., 2004). Through development and experiences of healthy and meaningful

supervisory relationships, students are also able to develop relational competence and relational complexity (Duffey et al., 2016).

Feminist Mentorship in Counselor Education

Feminist mentorship embodies the mission of multicultural humility in counselor education. “Supervisees who lack self-awareness of the inherent messages they were sent about societal roles often cannot provide adequate assistance to clients who are working to break their own stereotypes and culture-bound limitations” (Degges-White et al., 2013, p. 99).

Traditional Masculinity

Masculinity is a socially constructed concept that includes specific rules and behaviors ascribed to men (Griffith & Cornish, 2018). A concept further articulated by Kimmel and Wade (2018) is hegemonic masculinity, or the centering of masculine identities that are dominant, competitive and aggressive over the whole spectrum of other masculine and feminine identities as ideal. Kimmel and Wade (2018) create the argument that men are in conflict between values of integrity and socially constructed masculine ideals of the power-hungry male. They argue that without naming the conflict and the center of this problem, societally we will continue to believe that men can and should wield undue power over others at the cost of recognizing more realistic forms of masculinity and complementary gender constructs. Without unpacking hegemonic masculinity norms, we risk invisible bias against male clients, students, supervisees, and mentees that further pushes them out of the culture of mental health and wellness (*APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men*, 2018).

Aspects of traditional male norms and masculinity standards may get in the way of men’s work as counselor’s: competition, restricted emotionality, restriction of affectionate behavior with other men- together making the argument that men will face complex relational issues

(Wester et al., 2004; Wester & Vogel, 2002; Yousaf et al., 2015). There may be great value of feminist tenets to guide emotional maturity in males- intentional analysis of power, collaborative relationship, reflexive self-examination, a focus on diversity, attending to the role of gender and level of development and advancement of that level (MacKinnon et al., 2011).

In addition, several researchers have documented issues with male counselors experience with gender role conflict and toxic masculinity including rigid ideologies of male characteristics and attitudes, affecting their self-efficacy and professional development (Wester et al., 2004; Wester & Vogel, 2002; Yousaf et al., 2015). The American Psychological Association drew attention to the unique issues facing men and their experiences of socially prescriptive masculinity (*APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men*, 2018). Likewise, if masculine norms are not addressed and challenged, they may affect relationships with female colleagues, as there is sufficient evidence to show that men are aware of sexism and sexist behaviors, but fail to recognize the harm done to women or to eschew privilege to support women (Pleasants, 2011; Precopio & Ramsey, 2017; Wiley et al., 2013; Wilkins et al., 2018).

Men as Feminists – Men's Position to Feminism

Men neither fit into pro-feminist or anti-feminist categories easily (Pleasants, 2011). Popular culture would have us believe that all feminists are female and that men are somehow separate or distinct from feminist ideology. This has likely influenced men to resist or maintain bias against feminism. Pleasants (2011) concludes that resistance is based on multiple discourses and is often but not always unconscious in men. They also discussed men's resistance in relation to being forced to disown their privilege and feeling compelled to prioritize their own feelings over the consequences of inequality to women (Pleasants, 2011). Moreover, men recognize that sexism is not fair but still fail to recognize the harm done (Precopio & Ramsey, 2017).

Silver et al. (2019) tested hypothesis that an additional category should apply when researching men's feminist identity, "unsure." The unsure group may feel feminism is too risky for their masculinity, are not buffered against masculinity stressors as feminist men are, and may feel they must relinquish authority (privilege) in order to identify as feminist (Silver et al., 2019). Unsure may be a step toward feminist identity, the preservation of traditional privilege, or its own distinct identification (Silver et al., 2019).

An empirical study on the effects of manipulating perspective on men's solidarity with feminists and resulting intention for social action concluded that men perceive alignment with feminism as a loss (Wiley et al., 2013). This provides a useful caution in that men aligned with feminists must actually gain instead of neutralize or lose credibility or authority (Wiley et al., 2013).

Summary of the Literature Review

A major implication from this literature review is a gap in our understanding of how mentorship changes when women mentor men. Based on common knowledge of patriarchal systems that designate power to men at a higher degree than women, we will continue to experience the identified limitations in availability and effectiveness of mentorship at a leadership level. Additionally, there have been distinct calls to a) expand diversity and inclusivity standards in counselor education (Borders et al., 2012), b) address traditional and toxic masculinity norms that impact many aspects of culture (Kimmel & Ward, 2018) , and c) elevate women as leaders to achieve equity in academia, counselor education, and perhaps most importantly, society (Black & Magnuson, 2005; Levitt, 2010).

The value of feminist/multicultural women mentoring men in the field of counselor education would likely stress the system initially but create necessary changes. In this model,

diversity is seen as powerful rather than a variable to tolerate (Benishek et al., 2004). It is likely that men will continue to be represented at the highest levels of education and building influence around multiculturalism would benefit all levels of the mental health field. This will ultimately increase skill level for male mentees in a way that traditional mentorship could never. Additionally, feminist mentorship encourages the use of networks of mentors, unlike traditional models, that will increase the amount of support and instrumental success a doctoral student could experience (Benishek et al., 2004).

In mentorship, the quality of the relationship is the most prominent variable that leads to successful outcomes. Past studies have provided evidence that indicates in counselor education mentorship, there is room for improvement, as only 50% of participants described the mentorship relationship as "open" and only 33% of respondents described the relationship as egalitarian (Briggs & Pehrsson, 2008). This reinforces the need for qualitative evaluation of the relationship factors that contribute to protégé success.

There is a distinct and relevant call for research on doctoral research mentorship in counselor education (Borders et al., 2012). A natural jumping off point for studying relevant contributing variables to successful outcomes in mentorship relationships is to narrow focus to study specific relationships with potential for important implications.

Due to the extent of the identified research gap, we are at ground zero to understand the unique qualities of women mentoring men and the implications for that specific pair on individuals and the field of counselor education.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the overall design of the research study, participants of the study, data collection and analysis procedures, and trustworthiness practices upheld within the research process.

Research Design

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was the research design chosen for this study. IPA is concerned with capturing a rich and meaningful account of a phenomenon from a small purposive sample of participants reflecting on their experience and how they have made meaning of that experience (Smith, et al., 2009). IPA was the method of choice for this study based on the focus of understanding key relational dynamics between female feminist counselor education mentors and their traditional male mentees. Additionally, IPA was designated as a method capable of producing a more in-depth analysis of participant's experiences in order to explore possible implications of how this particular mentorship relationship could have a broader impact on the field of counselor education and counseling as a whole or perhaps influence or disrupt the status quo of mentorship as a male role.

IPA is an inductive qualitative research paradigm rooted in the principles of phenomenology (the study of lived experiences of a phenomenon), Hermeneutics (making sense of, or interpreting meaning), and Ideography (concerned with the particular over the universal) (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). IPA is well-suited for counselor education research for two reasons. First, it corresponds with the field's mission of engaging with in-depth exploration of individuals and their diverse lived experiences within the many contexts of their particular lives. Second, it utilizes researcher skill sets that are typical counselor skills and qualities such as interviewing, inference, analysis, communicating empathically, flexibility, and reflection (Miller

et al., 2018). Rather than a focus on what, IPA seeks to understand how a phenomenon was experienced and seeks to highlight the voices of every participant (Miller et al., 2018). This is accomplished by first completing an in-depth analysis of each case, and then analyzing converging and diverging themes and reporting participant quotes that provide contextual meaning of their experiences (Miller et al., 2018).

Participants

In order to understand the relational qualities between female feminist mentors and their traditional male mentees, a participant pair (dyad) format was chosen. This approach allowed the researcher to collect data from both individuals and create a richer account of the relational experience for both the mentor and the mentee. Care was taken to identify ideal informants to the experience of feminist cross-gender mentorship by creating stringent inclusion criteria to maintain close proximity to the research questions. Additionally, while generalizability is not a goal of and seen as a possible limitation to qualitative research, recruitment strategies were aimed at finding pairs that represented a range of levels of experience, geographic region, and academic research foci. Specific strategies and procedures are explained in the following paragraphs.

Population

The focus of this study was to further understand the concepts of mentorship within doctoral level Counselor Education and Supervision programs. I specifically targeted a mentorship pair that has been given very little empirical attention and may add dimension to multi-culturally focused mentorship, female mentors and male mentees. Therefore, the target population for this study was cisgender female feminist-oriented tenured/tenure-track mentors

working in CACREP accredited Counselor Education and Supervision programs in the United States and their past traditionally-oriented cisgender male, doctoral level mentees.

Sample

A purposive sampling method was utilized for this study as is recommended for IPA (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). IPA recommends that a study sample be small and homogenous in order to provide data that will allow for rich and concentrated descriptions of the phenomenon of study (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The optimal sample size for this study was three pairs which is considered to be an adequate sample size for a dyad focused study to explore within and between group themes (Larkin et al., 2009).

Study Recruitment

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board, participant recruitment began. Participants were initially selected based on the primary criteria of being a cisgender female working in a CACREP Counselor Education program and secondary criteria of likeliness to identify as a feminist as evidenced by published works on feminist research, supervision, pedagogy, or any research with a feminist framework. An internet search of published research articles including “feminist” and “counselor education” keywords was completed. The list was then narrowed by confirming candidate affiliation with CACREP Counselor Education programs. Multiple educators were identified as meeting the above criteria and were contacted via email by the researcher and asked if they a) met criteria, and b) had mentored a traditionally-oriented cisgender male doctoral mentee for which they would be willing to identify and provide contact information. Secondary recruitment was accomplished by asking mentors if they had colleagues that may fit the inclusion criteria. In those cases, the researcher contacted candidates by email directly to inquire about participation.

Once a mentor participant responded to the researcher to confirm interest in participating in the study and meeting all inclusion criteria (cisgender female, feminist mentorship identity, counselor educator, employed by a CACREP accredited program) they were asked if they could provide contact information for a past or current cisgender male doctoral-level mentee. Once the mentor identified a male mentee and provided contact information, the researcher contacted the mentee by email to ask if (a) they were willing to participate in an interview to discuss their mentoring relationship, and (b) they identified as a cisgender male and traditional in orientation to their gender identity. In order to protect the integrity of the mentor/mentee relationship, care was taken to include dyads in which there was no current evaluative role. All mentees were identified as post-mentorship (dissertating with a different identified committee chair or post-graduation) or being mentored by someone outside of their university.

Although no data was collected on reasons for participating in the study, participants may have been interested in this study based on the novelty of discussing feminist influence on men, having positive experience with the phenomenon of interest, or as an act of increasing developmental awareness of the mentorship process. No participants were directly affiliated with the researcher's institution. Mentors who responded to the invitation to participate but opted out included those who had not mentored any males, were professionally retired, or who were affiliated or trained in counseling psychology programs rather than counselor education.

Participant sampling was conducted in two iterations. Pairs one and two were identified and interviewed in the Fall of 2019. The final pair was identified and interviewed in the Spring of 2021. The time between data collection points allowed for more development of researcher competence and ability to engage with participants and engage in reflexive analysis. The final pair was identified first by the secondary sampling method (another participant mentor referred)

and also by identification through the literature review process (as a counselor educator focused on feminist issues). It is noteworthy that the third mentor was identified by a previous mentee, which likely adds a layer of complexity and influence. With that in mind, reflexivity was upheld by noting potential influence throughout data collection and analysis and utilizing an outside auditor for the data analysis process. Data analysis did not begin until all participant interviews were completed.

Data Collection

Qualitative data collection utilizes first person accounts of an experience or phenomenon that allow for analysis of multiple accounts to combine and further explain the phenomenon of interest. For this study, an informed consent and a semi-structured interview were utilized to make transparent the purpose of the research to explore the specific dynamics of a mentorship relationship between female feminist mentors and their traditional male doctoral mentees and to explore each party's account of the relationship.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Both mentors and mentees were asked to participate in a 30-60-minute interview to discuss their mentoring relationship. They were given the option of engaging in the interview face-to-face, by phone, or over tele-conference on the Zoom teleweb platform. Prior to the agreed upon meeting time, they were sent the informed consent for the study and the interview questions. All participants were explicitly informed that no information would be shared about their counterpart's interview or likewise between them and their counterpart.

Interview Format

Introduction of the Interview. Prior to beginning the interview, participants were sent the informed consent, the interview questions, and were invited to ask questions or voice

concerns. All participants were expressly told that their mentor/mentee knew they were being interviewed and would be talking about the relationship, but that no information would be shared by the researcher between the pair. Each mentor and mentee knew and confirmed by using their name they knew who their counterpart in the dyad was. Several key points regarding informed consent and privacy were highlighted by the researcher, including reminding participants that the interview would be recorded. The interview began when the participant provided explicit verbal consent to continue in the study.

Body of the Interview. Twelve questions were identified as important to answer the research questions and subsequent follow up questions were asked spontaneously during the interview to further clarify or gain deeper accounts of relational qualities. The interview questions for both the mentor and mentee are as follows:

1. How would you describe the relationship that you had with your mentor/mentee?
2. What is distinct about this relationship from other mentorship or supervision experiences you have had?
3. How would you describe your felt sense of the relationship?
4. What was/is your relationship like in the beginning, when it ended, and now?
5. How did you manage the differences between you (e.g., gender, age, race, experience)?
6. How was power experienced in this relationship?
7. What struggles did you have in this relationship?
8. In what ways do you consider this relationship successful or unsuccessful?
9. What has it meant for you to be in this mentoring relationship?
10. If you were to go back, what if anything would you change about your relationship as it was then?

11. What, if anything, have you learned from this relationship?
12. Is there anything that I missed that you would like to share?

Summary and Closure of the Interview. Following the completion of all interview questions and answers, the researcher provided an opportunity for participants to add any other information they deemed relevant to the study. In addition, they were given an opportunity to ask about the process, findings, or reporting of the study. Participants were then asked if they had any recommendations for other identified feminist mentors that could be contacted for the study. This was a secondary sampling strategy.

Data Analysis

Following completion of all six interviews, participant data was transcribed word-for-word including notes on tonal qualities and conversational breaks and pauses. During transcription, all identifying information about participants or affiliation was removed to ensure privacy standards. Data analysis occurred in separate "phases" and in accordance with IPA analysis guidelines (Smith et al., 2009). The analysis process in IPA is multi-dynamic and flexible rather than prescriptive with specific steps; it is more important for the researcher to focus on full immersion in the data to reflect on deep analysis of the participant accounts and the contexts in which they are situated in (Miller et al., 2018).

Data analysis was completed in three phases. The first phase of analysis reflected an in-depth case study of each participant account, one by one until emergent themes had been fully developed with nuanced understanding of a single participant account (Miller et al., 2018). This included a) carefully reading and re-reading the participant transcripts, b) recording researcher comments on notable participant descriptions and language, recording questions about concepts, and decontextualizing the participant accounts for deeper understanding c) developing and

recording initial themes, d) searching for and recording thematic connections and e) bracketing the emerging ideas from the current case to move on to the next case (Smith et al., 2009).

The second phase of analysis began once each case had been analyzed completely. In this phase, analysis turned to extrapolating patterns within each pair to notate converging, diverging, reciprocal, and meaningful interactions of the participant accounts (Larkin et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2009). This was done by noting the essence of each answer to each interview question on post it notes. Post-it notes in distinct colors to demarcate each participant were compared across pairs and a table was created to designate each comparison as converging, diverging, reciprocal, or otherwise meaningful.

The third phase began after analysis of all participant pair accounts was complete. Data across all participants accounts were analyzed to develop structural and procedural themes that describe the relationship of cross-gender mentorship pairs in this sample (Smith, et al. 2009). The previously created post-it notes were moved to compare all mentor responses to all mentee responses to infer broader units of meaning which made up each superordinate themes. All superordinate themes were derived from agreement across all pairs. When only partial agreement existed across all pairs, a subordinate theme or themes were established to support nuanced understanding of the superordinate theme.

Trustworthiness: Rigor and Credibility

Audit Trail

The audit trail contains all of the procedural steps taken to hold the researcher and the research question(s) in focus (Smith et al., 2009). The audit trail for this study began with recording the initial thoughts and questions that initiated the inquiry and continued with notes taken throughout the research process, including in the reflexivity journal that is explained

below. Additionally, the research proposal serves to outline, in detail, the framework that was created to answer the research questions. Other mechanisms that make up the audit trail include recordings and then transcriptions of the participant interviews, drafts of each set of analysis notes, tables of themes, drafts of the report, and the final report. Consultation with colleagues that are experienced with IPA, feminist research, or aspects of the study took place throughout the research process, from development to writing the final report.

Theoretical Research Framework

Feminist research was the framework used to guide this research study. Feminist research is nested in core feminist philosophies and seeks to highlight problems within systems that perpetuate inequality (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). One important distinction that makes research feminist is a focus not only on understanding participant accounts of a phenomenon but placing them in context and using research as a mechanism for social change (Hays & Singh, 2012). Another distinction of feminist research is ascription to knowledge being created or co-created, as the researcher is acknowledged as part of the research process (Hays & Singh, 2012). Lastly, feminist research seeks to equalize power between the researcher and research participants (Gray et al., 2015).

Feminist research was an appropriate theoretical fit for this research study because equality is a major focus of the relationship and of the ideals for counselor education. Power sharing between the researcher and participants was carried out in several ways: making transparent all parts of the research process, asking for feedback or concerns from participants before, during, and after interviews, making concerted attempts at reflexivity around language and behaviors that are rooted in privilege or inequitable cultural practices, and consulting with colleagues who are experienced with feminist pedagogy, supervision, mentorship, and research.

Bracketing and Reflexive Practice

Bracketing is a common qualitative practice that means to set aside previous understandings in order to attend fully to the participant account (Hays & Singh, 2012; Smith et al., 2009). Bracketing was accomplished throughout the research process by taking notes prior to and following each participant interview, and during the data analysis process to bring to light, and then set aside, specific thoughts and preconceived notions of the researcher.

Reflexive practice in phenomenological research is the process of attending to the researcher's experience of the participants experience. In other words, the researcher self-reflects on the content of the experience or interaction with the participant while considering thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are occurring simultaneously and perhaps in response to the events of the experience (Hays & Singh, 2012). I attempted to expand the scope and aims of reflective practice to include radical reflexivity or embracing the iterative, ambiguous, developmental, and messy aspects of the process (Smith & Luke, 2021). Reflexivity practice in this study was achieved by noting thoughts and questions throughout the study development process, participant interviews, data analysis, and writing phases which included incongruencies and transformative change processes and mechanisms in both the researcher and the participant accounts.

Reflexive Journal. Following each participant interview, the researcher engaged with reflexive journaling, making note of points of awareness, new thoughts or questions, potential biases in analysis, incongruencies, and any other important details for the analysis process. In addition to journaling, the researcher consulted with research colleagues that were familiar with the study to discuss questions and new thoughts; key points from consultation were then recorded.

Role of the Researcher. Because of the nature of IPA's double hermeneutic, the researcher's role is embedded in the research process as a meaning maker (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher is making sense of the narrative that is provided by the participant as the participant is making sense of their experience of the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009). It is in this way that the work becomes interpreted through the lens of the researcher and the importance of clarifying the researcher's implicit biases and beliefs about the phenomenon by bringing them to light.

Researcher Reflexivity Statement. I identify as a feminist researcher, supervisor, mentor, counselor, and human. I hold the persistent frame that all individuals are worthy of equal treatment as humans and that many struggles come from the position we are assigned by patriarchal and hierarchical norms. I consider the cornerstones of my existence as a feminist to hold values of transparency, empowerment, autonomy, and personal and shared power as imperative to interpersonal work.

I undertook this work with curiosity about the unique talents that feminist women as counselor educators may offer "up" to our collegial counterparts who are given social, financial, and authoritative privilege in society by nature of their gender.

I believe that feminist mentorship (not unlike any mentorship) is a purposeful relationship where the mentor holds a leadership position and thus a degree of power or authority, and the mentee is seeking to gain a degree of power or authority likely through the context of the relationship. What makes feminist mentorship unique is that these concepts are continually made transparent as they are central to the theory. A mentor that identifies as feminist likely upholds the tenets of feminist therapy that include autonomy, transparency, empowerment, and collaboration.

It is likely that power is a central issue to the feminist mentor, and they will likely analyze the concept throughout the mentorship relationship in order to increase or decrease behaviors that lead to disempowerment of the mentee or individuals in the mentee's life including clients, supervisees, collaborators, research participants, etc. The process of feminist mentorship is likely intimate in terms of the care that is taken to evaluate intersecting layers of power and disempowerment of the mentee.

Lastly, a feminist mentorship relationship that is cross-gendered will have unique elements as privilege will be a likely construct of interest. I hold the position that feminist mentorship relationships are unique and crucial to male counselor educators in training as they deepen reflection of gender and power dynamics. I have not participated in a cross-gendered feminist mentorship relationship, and I am curious about the unique characteristics and how males are impacted by these relationships given the long-standing myth of feminists gaining power by disempowering men.

Summary of Methodology

IPA was the research design used for this study. IPA was the most appropriate research design because it seeks to create an in-depth understanding from a small sample of participants, as this pairing is likely uncommon across all counselor education programs. IPA does not pursue the essence of the experience or relationship, but the deeper contextual understanding of a pair that has not yet been specifically studied, and that theoretically has potential to influence positive change in multiple contexts.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological study was to explore the unique relationship characteristics and dynamics of cross-gender feminist mentorship pairs in counselor education through data collected from those with lived experiences. Data collected from participant interviews were analyzed first independently as a case study and then by participant pair to understand the experience from both nuanced positions. A final phase of analysis provided additional depth across all participant pairs to further extrapolate themes that are common, divergent, or reciprocal among the participant sample (Larkin et al., 2019).

This chapter will discuss the themes that emerged from the participant data and provide participant quotes to illustrate the unique relational qualities identified. No demographic information was explicitly collected from participants in this study. Although it is commonplace in qualitative research to provide brief descriptions of each participant to understand their unique perspectives and positionality, no descriptions will be provided herein which further protects the anonymity of participants and allows the participant accounts to coalesce and highlight the pair from both mentor and mentee standpoints.

The Participant Pairs

All participant pairs consisted of a cisgender female, feminist-oriented mentor affiliated with a CACREP accredited Counselor Education doctoral program and a cisgender male, non-feminist or traditionally-oriented, doctoral level mentee who was not or no longer in an evaluative role with his mentor. Mentees were either post-graduation, dissertating with a different committee chair, or affiliated with a separate university and department. All participants noted their mentorship arrangements as informal or chosen by the mentee rather than their department. While no demographic data will confirm, the mentees represented a range of ages

and years of experience in the field of counseling. The mentors years of experience ranged from four to sixteen years as a counselor educator and were both pre- and post-tenure status. No two pairs were affiliated with the same university or department and no pairs were affiliated with the researchers university or department. Lastly, the mentors identification as a feminist was not prescriptive or formal, but self-identified and unique to each individual based on their development and influences. Participant quotes are de-identified to maintain privacy but are noted by their status (mentor/mentee) and a number (1, 2, 3) to illustrate when participant accounts overlap, diverge, or merge across pairs.

Table 1

Participants

Participant Pair	Mentor	Mentee	Pair
Pair One	At least four years of experience as a counselor educator. Rooted in Counselor identity. Focus on feminist research and social justice topics.	Ph.D. in progress. Quant preference. Focus on clinical practice and experimental research.	Initiated by mentee. Mentor serves on committee as a member, supervisor and research professor. Working on a collaborative article.
Pair Two	At least four years of experience as a counselor educator. Ten chaired dissertations. Focus on Diversity issues.	Graduated Ph.D. New Counselor Educator. Quant Preference. Focus on Supervision/mentorship.	Mentor served as dissertation committee chair, comps committee, and research professor.
Pair Three	16 yrs. Experience. Over 40 dissertation Committees. Focus on research Methodology.	Ph.D. in progress. Quant certificate. Current qual exploration. Focus on Research mentorship and research methodology.	Mentorship and research and writing collaboration only. Affiliated with different universities.

Note: No demographic data was specifically collected, this information was derived from open demographic narratives.

Pair One

Pair one was consisted of an assistant professor of counselor education working in a large department within a research-oriented institution. She described her own training and education, rooted in a strong counselor identity and being educated by leaders in the field of counselor education. When she met her mentee, he was starting as a first-year doctoral student and she as a first-year faculty at the institution they were both affiliated with. Their professional relationship began in the classroom, then moved to supervisor-supervisee in clinical practice, and eventually research/writing collaboration. The mentorship relationship was initiated by the mentee who described his interest in working with her developing from a rapidly increasing comfort with research, guided by her encouragement of his ability. At the time of the interviews the mentee was in the dissertation phase of his program and their affiliation continued through "professional friendship" and research/writing collaboration as she was not serving as his committee chair or in any other evaluative role.

Pair Two

The second mentor was an assistant professor of counselor educator in a large department at a research-intensive university. She described her leadership roles and particular interest in working with doctoral students through the dissertation process. Her mentee described meeting her as he was in his first year in the program when she interviewed for her faculty position. He described his initial impression of her approachability building to awareness of her competency in research and research methodology as a student in the classroom. He initiated collaboration with her throughout his doctoral program culminating in his request for her to serve as his dissertation committee chair. She describes a distinct sense of surprise by this request based in

the idea that “men choose men”. At the time of the interviews the mentee had completed his degree and had accepted an assistant professor position in a counselor education program.

Pair Three

The third participant pair consisted of an experienced counselor educator, now in a more distinct leadership role in her affiliated university who was acting as a research mentor for a doctoral student in another program in another area of the country. Their relationship began when he attended a presentation she was giving at a national conference and he approached her about her expertise on research methodology. He initiated further contact at her suggestion and they began research and writing collaboration, eventually building a research team. At the time of the interviews, they had completed several projects and were in the process of a research project led by the mentee. He described lasting astonishment about the opportunity to work with his mentor and she noted being firmly rooted in her desire to foster research collaboration and the ease and growth that comes from working outside a traditional academic mentorship framework.

Findings

Findings from this study represent the double hermeneutic of the IPA research methodology. The double hermeneutic refers to the researcher from their human experience, making sense of the participant who is articulating meaning from their own, separate lived experience (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenological research seeks to provide rich detailed descriptions of a phenomenon of interest by engaging in a rigorous analytical process to identify accounts of meaning from participant interviews (Hays & Singh, 2012). The analytical process used in this study was based on Smith and colleagues’ (2009) outline of thematic development for IPA. Analysis began by noting reflexive thoughts and questions that emerged during the

interview process. After all participant interviews were completed, analysis continued by transcribing participant interviews word for word, noting all communication nuances such as noteworthy tonal qualities and pauses in communication. I, as the researcher, checked the transcriptions for accuracy. Then after reading and then re-reading the transcripts, I made notes on codes of meaning in content and language. Once a transcript was coded completely, the codes were examined to create emergent themes from each participant transcript to create a case study of each participant account. Analysis of all individual participants using the above-described process was completed before moving on to the second phase of analysis.

The second phase of analysis began by creating visual representations of each conceptual expression within each participant pair (mentor/mentee). For example, as participants described the relationship, their individual descriptions were recorded onto different colored post-it notes and then compared, to identify the overlapping, divergent, or reciprocal lines of meaning they described (Larkin et al., 2019). This continued for all distinct concepts that were covered in the participant interview and then the post it notes were arranged to identify structural and procedural nuances that began to answer the research questions. As themes emerged from this process, I gave initial titles to each theme using the language of the participants that best portrayed the essence of the theme. Once all themes were titled, specific participant quotes were extracted to communicate the thematic meaning.

Phase three, the final phase of analysis was achieved by creating a code book with superordinate and subordinate themes and corresponding highly illustrative participant quotes. Each of these themes was then checked or audited to confirm goodness of fit both by the researcher and two outside auditors in two iterations of this process. Care was taken to equally represent the voices of the participants by tallying their representation in the final codebook as

well as selecting equal accounts in participant dyad's of overlapping, divergent, and reciprocal accounts. The codebook was then used to identify "paths of meaning" and "lines of argument" between dyads and within the entire sample (Larkin et al., 2019). Those storied accounts grouped into themes and further broken into sub-themes are presented below.

Superordinate Themes

Three superordinate themes emerged from the data: 1. An evolution of the mentorship relationship; 2. Leveling the unnecessary hierarchy and 3. Expecting the unexpected: Surprising elements and outcomes. Each superordinate theme had two to four subordinate themes that describe the more specific nuanced dynamics of the relationship. Whenever possible, I utilized participant language to caption themes in order to represent and elevate the participant voice. Where themes are described through narrative rather than participant quotes, my lens as researcher is used to make deeper meaning of all participant accounts and the reflexive research process.

Superordinate Theme: An Evolution of the Mentorship Relationship

The meaning of the term evolution here is threefold. The most obvious application is the participants experience of the relationship as evolving and changing over time, cultivating a relationship that is satisfying and comfortable in the present moment. The second function of evolution refers to the participants experience of identity development in their academic processes. The mentees' development is in some ways implied, as mentorship is meant to be a vehicle to develop the mentee. However, these mentees describe developing in ways that are unexpected in context of the traditional mentorship literature. This concept is further elucidated below. The mentor's experience of development is just as obvious as the mentees, which indicates clear influence from a belief or philosophy in the "learner" role as a mentor. The third

use of evolution refers to a culmination of the participant accounts to suggest that mentorship expectations and capacity has changed and grown over time, from the mentee being seen as a sort of assistant to the mentor to a more equitable arrangement that involves negotiation, boundaries, and active communication.

As is true with all relationships, there is a process that unfolds over time. All of the participants described the evolution of their relationship from more formal or boundaried interactions between teacher and student to a more flexible, intimate collegial relationship. One of the mentors described the evolution like this

> Very, very professional, very boundary… just business like, schedule supervision, let's do the supervision, and even in supervision, kind of task oriented, like. Okay, um, so let's talk about your tape, let's do a, b and c. Very structured…Towards the end of supervision, I think we both found that kind of our supervisory role together was more consultative, than student/teacher. And then in the research course, you know, I hope my intention is to let the students take the lead, and like, I'm just there as a cheerleader like, yes, let's explore this idea.

What appears to be unique about this relationship is that participants described different means and processes that created movement to "consultative" in the relationship including means that are often described as foundational to feminist practice, transparency, empowerment, self-disclosure, and de-mystification. One example of self-disclosure and de-mystification was achieved by a mentor discussing writing development with her mentee and disclosing that she as a prolific author (and native English speaker) had been encouraged to find a native English speaker to look at her paper prior to submitting it for publication.

An additional level of evolution occurred as the relationship was developing; each participant referenced their own identity development process beginning with “imposter syndrome” or the belief of self as fraudulent and incompetent. They discussed the unraveling of this identity being facilitated by and through their mentorship experiences. For example, one of the mentees discussed feeling intimidated by being the youngest in his research class and his mentor empowering him to “try” his idea which she saw as “innovative” and “important”. By encouraging the use of his own research ideas, he was better able to develop confidence in himself and in his skills. Surprisingly, this was not true only for the mentees, as the mentors also discussed further mentorship identity development occurring as a result of this meaningful relationship experience. One of the mentors described her development process this way:

> I think it, it probably taught me more about me than [it] did about [Mentee]… my own hesitancies and things that I was scared of, like, I put the cart before the horse in a lot of these ‘Oh, he's not gonna respect me,’ it wasn't like that. That was all me. Kind of. And that's a lesson, right? Like, I really need to take all my students with what they're actually giving me and not what I suppose they're going to give me. So, I think that's what makes it distinct is I probably came into this with my, more of my own resistance or assumptions about how it was going to go, than I thought it with my other students who are women.

Not only does this mentor admit feeling outside of her values with the bias she identified, but her use of reflexivity is also clear. This account is in line with feminist ideology that places an importance on growth through connection and collaboration. This mentor describes the distinction from relationships she had with female mentees and her reflection allows for

realignment with her values and the values of the field of counselor education to practice non-judgement and to eliminate biases as much as possible.

Lastly, all of the participants described a relationship with their mentor or mentee which could be described as mutually beneficial in some way. Mutual benefit in the form of relational mutuality is an evolution of traditional mentorship expectations and is often thought to be problematic in relationships that involve an evaluative role. The participants achieved mutuality in multiple ways, which are described through each of the subordinate themes.

Subordinate Theme: The "Symbiotic" Nature of the Relationship. When describing the relationship, all of the mentors and mentees gave accounts of a relationship that was meaningful, comfortable, and of which they learned and gained from. One of the mentees used the term "symbiotic" to illustrate his experience of the relationship. Symbiotic is a term that describes a mutually beneficial partnership between two people, or in biological terms, two distinct species (merriam-webster.com). One of the mentors described the relationship in this way:

> This is kind of a gray area, I'm going to call it, it's like, when you meet someone, and you know that you'd be friends. That's kind of how it was. We weren't friends. We've never hung out in any kind of non-university setting. But there was just kind of a natural kind of rapport there, I suppose. So, back to the internal feeling. It felt like he understood what I was trying to say, and vice versa, even though I would say we have pretty, very different styles clinically.

Her description of the "gray area" the relationship was in, indicates that it doesn't fit a typical or ordinary pattern for relationships. She hesitated to discuss the relationship in friendly terms but recognized that the relationship was comfortable and able to hold communication and trust in a

satisfying way. This is similar to a description given by another mentee who described the relationship with

> words like a research mentor a professional relationship, an evolving relationship. For me, professionally, a very meaningful relationship. She has really helped me in my career in so many ways, and to help me grow in different aspects of my career…So that's, you know, so to have that, you know, person that you can talk with about things that you're passionate about is pretty special…she's somebody that I can share those professional joys with as well, you know, and so I hope that I would be a mentor that would also invest in their mentees and see them more than just, you know, a person on a career path or something like that.

This whole person orientation to both people in the relationship that is described by several of the participants appears to facilitate a depth of the relationship that is comfortable, meaningful, and mutually beneficial. It seems to exist in a "gray area" compared to past experiences of mentorship or academia. Two of the mentors discussed past relationships with their mentors who had troublesome expectations of them to emulate or "be like" them with little "developmental support". Mentees did not specifically describe their past mentorship relationships but eluded to harm by overly authoritative mentors. With any of these examples the participants are discussing a more holistic experience in their current mentoring relationship in which they are intending to see their mentee as a person with many identities and needs or for the mentees, are receiving the message that all parts of them are acceptable to the mentoring process. One of the mentees described this by noting that his mentor "cares" about me and seemed to be supporting not only him, but his family too by affording him education on how to grow his

career beyond what he could achieve on his own. This loyalty to mutuality in the relationship is often referred to as collegiality. The participants defined collegiality in their accounts below.

Subordinate Theme: Collegiality is the Objective and the Goal. All of the participants described the relational goal of collegiality; one of the mentors described it this way:

> I think it's evolved like pretty, what I would say is normally, like all my relationships with all my mentees have evolved. Or at first, it feels much more structured and more tense. And then through the process…I feel like becomes more collegial. And my philosophy is like a good blend of challenge and support…I think it really builds a strong working relationship with the students that I work with, regardless of gender. And then after that, I'm kind of like, hey, please call me [first name]. Like, you're my colleague now. I respect you; you know, you know just as much as I do.

While collegiality is often named as a goal or endpoint in a successful mentorship relationship, a unique distinction described by the participants of this study was the use of collegiality objectively throughout the course of the relationship achieved by an open and honest relational dynamic. One of the mentees described his experience of noticing collegiality this way:

> Early on we had a lot more face to face meetings, and then…as it's kind of developed and, you know, I'm not taking classes with her, or with her, and we're working on the manuscript. I don't necessarily meet with her face to face as much, which I think has been kind of a struggle, because I do like, I like interacting with her. You know I like our conversations; we can be open and honest. And so, I guess that's been more of like a personal struggle.

This exchange refers to the struggle of the relationship being the loss of collegial interaction in the active phase of mentorship. She appears to be confident that he can act on his own now and is capable of autonomy in this stage of mentorship as he transitions from “learner” to “knower”. His report of experiencing this as a loss or “struggle” indicates that the interactions were more than just task or career oriented, but something more relational or presence-oriented that created energy and motivation for him. This relational presence that he alludes to indicates a new experience that brings with it repair from past dissatisfied experiences as well as perspective for a “keen eye” to hierarchical and oppressive structures. This is further explained below.

Subordinate Theme: The Privilege of Perspective: A Corrective Experience. Some of the mentees described past relationships that had been harmful to their ability to connect as a teacher or student. The participants indicated that this relationship had a corrective element that facilitated growth in their identity development process. The following quotes describe the corrective experience articulated by one of the pairs. The mentee said:

> I've always had an issue with authority. Okay. And so, I default, my default reaction with someone in a position of power is… ‘You're full of shit’ like you know you're just kind of, you're up on this pedestal. But when she went to bat for me, there was the pride because it was like you have intentionally…almost, there's a Carl Rogers saying I can't remember it, but…you know you've intentionally given up some of your perceived and it's my perception, but perceived authority to help someone that has less authority. And, at least in like an academic sense… it was kind of like this is a, this is someone who's in a position of authority that you can trust.

His mentor echoed this sentiment by saying

> I think I identified with him in some ways, just in terms of his age, and where he was in his program and where he was clinically…And so, helping him, the meaning that made for me was that I was kind of in some way [was] helping myself… in my own way, I kind of let him know, like, you are fine, I promise you are right on track. You are doing very, very well. And I wish someone had said that to me. You know? So that's probably something.

The element of empowerment described here, that is inherent to feminist principles is described by intentional power sharing in the relationship that is either unexpected or reparative to past experiences. Privilege is often seen as a negative: a blind use of power and the result is oppression of another. In these examples, each of the individuals in the dyad was able to use their own experience of power over as an opportunity to correct and practice power with and power to. Also, while hierarchical and patriarchal structures value competition and success, the participants discussed how failure was an assumption in the relationship and acted as a catalyst for growth in identity and the relationship.

Subordinate Theme: Iterations and Opportunities for Failure and Success. Lastly, while the success of the mentee and the continued success of the mentor is often the goal of the mentoring relationship, the participants described success with more dimension. A mentor discussed a missed opportunity to allow her mentee to experience failure in this way:

> I think I would have gone back and provided more space for him to do more, to mess up, to have a few more iterations of like, 'No, you're not addressing what the editor wants' those kinds of things so I probably would have had a little more patience with that piece. I don't feel like our, I don't regret anything about our dynamics, I just feel like I, I should

> have given for his own growth and my own growth like given him that extra space and to let him kind of do what he's going to do and present it and move forward.

This quote demonstrates a value of learning through failure rather than engaging with rigid norms around competitive or perfection focused success. This was resounded in a mentee's account as he noted his mentor's style of 'creating space' in the relationship with "unconditional positive regard, empathy, congruence, all of that".

Likewise, another mentee described the space that was created in his mentoring relationship to recognize identity development barriers to completion of his doctoral work. He described this dynamic:

> I would not be, I don't think I'd be here in the same I mean, I was going to get through the program regardless, it was just like how, I guess convenient, or how smooth was I going to get through the dissertation process, I think with [mentor], as smooth as it could be. Without her, I probably would have struggled a lot more, I probably would have had a lot more of the imposter phenomenon occurring. Because she was really good at… one: identifying that and two: breaking it down.

This mentee explains the "smooth" ness of the process created by his mentor offering transparent information about expectations of specific processes that set him up for success with no "tricks". When he labels this as a distinction in the relationship, it becomes clear that the mentors act in a unique fashion that does not mimic past experiences that are "unnecessarily hierarchical" rather than "human".

Superordinate Theme: Leveling the Unnecessary Hierarchy

Teacher/student relationships and therefore mentor/mentee relationships consist of evaluative roles and functions which create hierarchical organization. More specifically stated,

the mentor holds actual and perceived power in their duty to evaluate the competency or development of their mentee. This can extend beyond actual evaluative tasks to a relational dynamic that perpetuates the mentor as powerful and the mentee as subject to their power. The participants in this study noted they were aware that feminist mentors intentionally eschewed a hierarchical pattern outside of evaluative roles. They discussed their experiences of mentorship without hierarchy. One mentee referred to this as a "flipped" hierarchy by describing an experience of his mentor offering practical assistance:

> this is my power construct right here, she's an [position de-identified], and she's saying, if you need some articles, send them to me, and I will look them up and send them to you and I just don't know. I mean, that's it. That's just from my mind just flips things upside down for me.

All of the participants had accounts of either how they achieved this power leveling from the mentor's perspective, or how they experienced this leveling from the mentee's perspective. This participant quote spotlights just one way that the leveling was experienced. The tone of this exchange implies this is a very novel experience for him and therefore he has internalized and come to expect hierarchy and experiences of power over in relationships. The other mentees discussed the leveling by explaining their mentors as "firm but fair" or "at times vulnerable" and "human". This process of organizing without hierarchy appears to have important implications for counselor education and beyond that will be discussed in chapter five.

Due to the normality of hierarchical systems, especially in academia and business, progression or deconstruction of hierarchical systems could appear to be complicated or impossible based on the longevity of this organizational strategy. The mentors in this study appear to achieve a leveling of the hierarchy easily, through authentic and honest engagement.

Subordinate Theme: Managing Differences Through Authenticity. All of the mentors discussed using authenticity through power discourse or broaching power dynamics when appropriate. Many of the participants discussed their major differences as gender and experience, that could be experienced as a sensitive topic. One mentor discussed her feminist identity and leveling the power imbalance by focusing on values and a "humble" position:

> I do identify as a feminist and for a long time I didn't really understand what feminist meant as a word. I think we think, traditionally of it as, like, you know, attending critically to gender and how that sort of plays out in power and those things, and yes, that's really important, but there's some other pieces in terms of just my personal value system kind of coalescing with my professional values of wanting to collaborate, assuming a position that I'm not an expert, so no matter what my rank is or how much I've published or whatever, like I have something to learn, and I truly have that mindset. So, I think the collaboration, that piece, the making sure that kind of, the voice of mentees or even students are, that they feel comfortable to share like as much as they can, but they want to, were able to challenge me, whether it's in when I'm teaching or whether it's in a research project. So that's kind of been just important to me just to remain humble.

Authenticity can be defined as being true to one's beliefs and character and the belief that one is worthy as they are (merriam-webster.com). The mentors expressed an intention to be authentic such as the quote above. The mentees discussed different levels of being impacted by their mentees authenticity. One mentee discussed he "sensed internally that there was a genuine interest that she had…invested in myself and other students as well…that there was a genuine interest there in my development." He discussed this making a difference in his ability to connect

in the relationship. Another mentee noted an awareness of his mentor's authenticity but struggled to mimic this authenticity and bring up a concern to his mentor: "I guess my best, my best guess would be…I would like to think that, you know, I'm just as genuine just as authentic just as transparent as she was, and she would have been open to having a conversation". This experience of giving and accepting influence to grow was a common thread among the participants.

Subordinate Theme: I Can See Myself Reflected Back: Visualizing Influence. The reflection referred to in this subordinate theme discusses what many participants noted in engaging more intentionally with a reflexive standpoint to increase self and other advocacy. This reflection is explained by seeing more clearly who they are and are capable of through how they are treated by their mentor. One of the mentees' described his new learned framework for growth through mentorship:

> I'm not just learning research and how to model that. You know I'm seeing how she's compassionate and understanding and flexible and adaptable…I hope I would be the person that would work with a doc student and invest…she sees me not as just an individual that she's investing in, but a family system which I think is cool…I think that has to do with a lot of her values with social justice advocacy and a lot of these other things and, and, you know, because it's, because in my mind I feel like there would be other folks in the counselor education world that might have brought more return on [her] investment.

One of the mentors further defines the reflexive and intentional stance they take as a mentor in order to achieve mutual benefit and advocate for their own growth in the relationship. She describes it this way:

> It's just kind of, it's neat to be in some ways, a mentee, as a mentor. And that's really the way that I think about it because I get to sit as in the mentee chair and say, 'Okay, this is what someone else does to run a research team' or like this is how they sort of construct their process and the things they're thinking about, so it's given me a model of how to do it in the future, too, if that makes sense. So just that constant learning about how to mentor, you know.

These examples from both perspectives describe a quality of the relationship that depends on taking influence and taking risks to offer influence as well. The participants described growing from multiple aspects of influence through reflection including "encouragement" from their mentor and addressing "problems with boundaries" around committing to projects and "not wanting to let students down". As with any growth process will come opportunities to embrace vulnerability in the change process. The participants discussed their relationships growing as they were able to embrace their human vulnerability.

Subordinate Theme: Embracing Vulnerability. Many strategies are identified by the participants as facilitative to gaining depth in the relationship and growth as a person and professional. One strategy is the purposeful acceptance of vulnerability as a mechanism for change. There is evidence that the relationship dynamics go beyond a transactional exchange to a more storied and transformational experience.

Another reference to growing past the imposter syndrome emerged from participant accounts and attribution is given to the mentor for modeling aspects of vulnerability such as self-disclosure, de-mystification of the research and academic process, opportunities for collaboration, and empowerment for self-advocacy. One of the mentees' stated "it's been her

really modeling that I'm a part of the process at me really getting over my, you know, kind of that imposter syndrome piece."

In a similar manner, when asked what he learned through the relationship, another mentee labeled the following:

> All the things. I learned how, I definitely learned how to be a scholar. I definitely learned how to do a research project. I've learned how to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. I've learned how to be more transparent, more genuine. I've learned how to be a better feminist. And I've learned how to be a better mentor by being mentored by her…she's also human, like, yeah, she might have that perceived power from my perspective, but doesn't like doesn't have it herself, at least proceeding that way, to kind of just show me that she's human, and that, you know, she's relatable and approachable. And, you know, she can make mistakes too, just as we all can. So, like I said, I wouldn't label that as unsuccessful…Let's forget that…It's definitely part of the success.

This mentee initially questions his mentor's use of vulnerability through self-disclosure as something people could perceive as negative. As he examined this, he ultimately rearranged a pre-existing construct to see this as a marker for success in the relationship- the ability to trust one another with personal information and deepen intimacy and perspective.

Subordinate Theme: Power Discourse: the Privilege of Perspective. Finally, the participants discussed achieving a mutual working relationship by leveling the hierarchy through broaching power in relationships and deepening their understanding of how feminism seeks equity through discourse on power dynamics. The term "broaching" refers to the mentor's responsibility to discuss directly and transparently topics that may impact the course of the relationship in order to negotiate strategies for success. Only one pair identified a direct

discussion of gendered power; this mentor noted that she brought up gender in a number of contexts to build her mentee's awareness of complexity of how gender matters. One of the mentors saw the absence of this discussion as a missed opportunity that may have been created by her discomfort with broaching based on past negative experiences of offering feedback to male supervisees. The remaining mentor discussed broaching as an important practice when appropriate and noted there was not a need for it in their relationship as gender equity seemed to be organic. However, they did note that while mutuality and shared power was an organic quality of their relationship, her mentee continued a pattern of "deference" in the relationship: "I struggled too, with him in terms of because like we've gone, and we've been in this for years now and he still can be a little deferential." Her account indicates confusion on why her mentee persists with creating hierarchical organization in the relationship, an indication that this systemic norm is slow to change. Nevertheless, the mentees expressed meaningful learning about feminism and power sharing. Following is a quote from a mentee describing feminist perspectives on power and privilege in life and mentorship:

> when I think about feminism or feminist thought, I think about equality. I think about being able to see the imbalance in power, especially related to gender. And, and being able to have a keen eyes to be able to see these things, in life and everyday life, and, and then mentorship

This description of power emphasizes development of perspective in order to more effectively achieve equality in relationships. Privilege is often a barrier to understanding harmful power structures. A mentor describes her mentee's evolution of gaining perspective on power and privilege:

> developmentally, he grew a lot in understanding his male privilege and how to work more effectively with women…And he took that stuff on board from the beginning. So, I guess I would hypothesize that he probably comes in a fair amount of humility and is open to growth and change. And seeing the areas where maybe he needed that.

Overall, the mentors note that utilizing power discourse was effective in leveling conscious hierarchical dynamics, but that unconscious biases are more difficult to change. The mentees report growing from opportunities of power discourse as is reflected in one mentee's account of being "a better feminist" and another discussing his request for "an assist" from his mentor, knowing she was focused on social justice and multiculturalism. At any rate, the participants illustrate a picture that some of the elements of the relationship were predictable and others were not.

Superordinate Theme: Expecting the Unexpected: Surprising Elements and Outcomes

It would not be accurate to say the participants were surprised at the dynamics or successful outcomes of their mentorship relationships, but each of them labeled an essence of surprising or unexpected experiences. A notable example is the complementary descriptions that mentees made of their mentors as "nurturing", "firm but fair", and "graceful and humble". Each of the mentees offered these terms in a tone that indicated they were surprised by finding these qualities in their mentors. However, these are unsurprising or typical "feminine" qualities which the mentees experienced as surprising within the context of the academic mentorship relationship.

Altogether, the participants named their experiences of surprise emerging from a different experience with power and academia, a shift in the assumptions of cross-gender mentorship and

finding a relationship that has potential to be long-lasting and mutually beneficial. Below are examples illustrating unexpected elements within the subordinate themes.

Subordinate Theme: Wielding Power with Grace. The expression of shared power was experienced as organic or natural in each relationship, experienced as unexpected by both mentors and mentees. One of the mentors described the following:

> because of the gender dynamic, I think, I think that actually helps with the, the power balance a little bit. Because, again, if, if it's been his experience, that he kind of naturally feels a little more power, and if it's been my experience, that I generally feel like I have less power in relationship with a man, then maybe that could, but I'm in the supervisory role, maybe that balances it out. Okay, you know, so maybe that's why it felt pretty natural and easy. Um, I don't know if I think that with all men…But I'll just say that about him.

Similarly, another mentor described her surprise at her mentees' ability to engage without power over dynamics and how that appeared as distinct from her previous experiences with men:

> I never really felt in our direct relationship maybe some of the socio-political dynamics that can sometimes come out in cross-gender mentoring relationships, I always felt like it went really smooth. [Mentee] always took feedback really well. And again, never really have, [you] know how some men with… this sounds really bad, have just like a really hard time, like taking feedback from women…I didn't have that issue with [mentee].

Her mentee discussed his reciprocal account of feeling surprised and 'refreshed' by having a professional relationship in which he could increase his level of autonomy and equality with a mentor. He shapes his account like this:

> I'd like to think that I'm a transparent person and authentic agenda with whomever I'm working with…it was refreshing, I'd say, to have a fellow now a fellow colleague, counselor educator, but at that time, you know, a mentor, somebody above me in the hierarchy, which she still is, I can safely admit that. Refreshing, like I said, to have somebody that would meet me where I needed to be met and talked to me as if I knew what was going on all the time, even though sometimes I didn't. Um, so yeah, that was that was really beneficial. It's not that I wasn't getting that from my other …mentors or anything, but she stood out because of that authenticity… and that transparency.

The final theme unpacks the mistruths of cross-gender relationships that are reflected in some of the literature highlighted in chapter two as well as in central societal narratives.

Subordinate Theme: It Is Not What It Looks Like. There are specific assumptions made of cross-gender interactions that are problematic in terms of growth and expansion of effective mentoring practices. One of these assumptions was noted by a mentor when she discussed being unexpectedly chosen by her male mentee:

> I remember when he asked me to be his chair, I was actually surprised, I guess I just assumed he would have chosen to work with one of my tenured male colleagues. I just assumed that, so when he asked me, I was surprised. I was like, 'okay, let's see how this goes'. And it was, it was fine. So maybe a lot of it was my own worries and fears about working with a man which I probably sounded invalid based on, you know, women's experiences, my own included. So, at any point it never felt tense, like we never had any weird stuff, I felt like we could really be honest with each other. I feel like I continue to mentor him, we call or text about work stuff, or he needs a consult about things. So, for me, I don't think; and this is just like feminist practice, right? I don't feel like

> relationships just like end when you graduate, I think these are really evolving and changing things

Her mentee expressed an overlapping sentiment from many of the participants that names the unexpectedness of experiencing power differently in an academic relationship. He indicates a reticence to accepting such a different concept. He seems to be in the middle of a process of relearning the possibilities of power and how power sharing can appear in relationships. He articulates his experience like this:

> So, my understanding is the mentor has the power, mentee has, you know, less power and is learning from said mentor. That's just how the literature defines it. And that is 100% where most of my, 'hey, [mentor], can I do this?' Or 'hey, [mentor], is this right?' came from because she was the holder of that validation and the holder of that power, to say, that's how you do it. That's how you don't do it. That's right. That's wrong. 100% that, that was, that is still my somewhat understanding, although it's a little more abstract now. Power in relationships like that…, she never assumed that or took that mantle of being the one with the power.

Finally, what may be most unexpected is the demystification around what feminist mentorship is. Because feminism is a personal identification, a non-prescriptive and flexible concept that refers to a person's commitment to equal treatment for all people and social change that promotes equality, certain elements can be ambiguous to name or exemplify.

When asked if she had additional comments in her interview, one of the mentors questioned her fit for the study and noted a struggle to identify as "relational" as a feminist, a surprising exchange given that her mentee had described the relationship as "symbiotic" and expressed tremendous personal and professional growth by and through the relationship. Another

mentor unpacked an important point in that feminist mentorship does not have to be different or distinct from traditional mentorship. It is also subject to unhelpful biases and assumptions about the role of feminism in mentorship and academia. She notes her insight on feminist mentorship and her hope for the impact of this study like this:

> you know the language stuff is important and like you know when people hear feminist mentor, they think that, that's like a special kind of mentor. I think all mentors should be, should have feminist values and mentorship is around feminist values…this isn't about feminist mentorship, it's about good mentorship, and these are the characteristics which happened to be aligned with feminism, right? So, I would just say, because otherwise I think people hear feminist mentorship and they, you know I'm talking about hating men and sexism all day and that's not it at all. I'm certainly aware of gender differences, and I'm certainly aware of different experiences that mentees have in their lives because of their gender or because of the things that have been prescribed to them because of their gender, but that's really just kind of foundational, right? Is understanding kind of people's lives and the barriers that they're facing, not just based on their gender but race, ethnicity, and so forth. And then seeing those call it, you know, bringing attention to those in the relationship, and then using that to build, build a relationship with them, and then saying, 'okay, let's move forward and learn together.'

Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the findings from six participant interviews concerning their experiences with feminist cross-gender mentorship, undertaken to understand the unique qualities of this under-explored relationship. Thematic findings were a result of the data collection and analysis processes outlined in chapter three. Superordinate themes included: An

evolution of the mentorship relationship, Leveling the unnecessary hierarchy, and Expecting the unexpected: Surprising elements and outcomes. Each theme is explicated by participant quotes and by the use of subordinate themes to organize within and across group findings.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The focus of this chapter is to summarize the study and to discuss ideas and conclusions that can be drawn from the research findings. The summary includes a review of the research questions guiding the study, the purpose and context of those questions, and the overall design used, with limitations of the study. More specifically, the author examines the findings in context of existing literature and discusses implications for mentorship in counselor education, and directions for future research.

The current study was conducted to address a gap in the research and to explore and highlight the unique features of feminist cross-gender relationships. Feminism was used as a theoretical framework and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was chosen as a fitting methodology. These were fitting as research frameworks to explore and determine a depth of understanding of known and unknown aspects, centering the voices of women and men with lived experience which is extended through the double hermeneutic reflexive researcher lens and voice (Smith, 2009). This study was undertaken for two key reasons a) to offer corroborative evidence of the significance of feminist mentorship as aligned with counselor education purpose, mission, and values, and b) to offer new evidence of a possible transformative change mechanism for men as counselor educators.

The goal of this study was to address a major gap in the literature in empirical understanding of the unique qualities and experiences of pairs that include female feminist mentors and male counselor education doctoral students. Though mentorship is a topic frequently studied and discussed in higher education and counselor education, the focus is rarely on women as leaders to men. In fact, at the time of writing, and known to the researcher, no empirical studies had been published on the topic. As a researcher, my intention was to delve

into the topic to provide a deeper analysis of diverging dimensions that could promote additional research on feminist mentorship and the mentorship needs of specific groups of students. My hope was that by jumping into this topic I could explore and learn about this relationship and provide avenues for additional research and focus on feminist mentorship in counselor education. A discussion of the outcomes of that intention and hope is provided below.

In order to achieve clarity in the answers to the research questions that were central to the design, implementation, and interpretation of the study, the following includes two separate sections of discussion. The first section clarifies the findings in context of the research question and sub-questions and the section that follows outlines the findings in context of the themes and the literature.

Discussion of the Research Questions

This section provides a direct link between the research questions guiding the study and the findings detailed in chapter four.

Major Research Question

What are the qualities of the mentoring relationship between female, cisgender, feminist-oriented counselor education mentors and their male cisgender traditionally-oriented doctoral counselor education mentees?

There are several distinct qualities of the mentoring relationships described by participants in this study. Identification of the qualities was accomplished through an extensive and dynamic analysis process which helped to excavate the known an unknown qualities intended by mentors and perceived by their mentees. In addition to the qualities the participants have recognized in their relationship, I as the researcher offer an interpretation of these qualities garnered from the literature on mentorship and feminist mentorship, interactions with all

participants, and existing relational knowledge. Therefore, the identified relational qualities include transparency, mutuality, and influence.

Transparency was accomplished in multiple ways. First, all of the mentees described their mentors expressing their expectations with transparency. They all discussed this as a valuable part of the relationship in that they felt respected by their mentor and set up to succeed. Next, all of the mentorship pairs discussed self-disclosure and tolerance of vulnerability as a mechanism that did not detract from their goals or focus but deepened the level of understanding and trust in the relationship. Transparency also appeared to be used as a means for empowering the mentee to take risks, grow past beliefs about self, others, and the world, and to consistently self-identify. Additionally, the mentors and mentees discussed purposeful use of transparency to "de-mystify" the academic process. Each of the participants shared their own process or evolution of understanding and thriving within an academic system that can be intimidating or frustrating. The mentors purposefully unpacked the intricacies of these systems with concrete information and self-disclosure. Lastly, the mentors all indicated that in order to fully engage with their mentees growth and with their own growth, they utilized transparency in the reflexive process, using both successes and failures as an opportunity to intentionally course correct and develop as counselor educators. The transparency identified in the study aligns with Borders and colleagues (2012) guidelines for mentorship relationships in counselor education.

Mutuality was another distinct relationship quality that emerged from the participant interviews. Mentors and mentees all indicated a dedication to and awareness of equal work in their relationship. In some pairs this was identified through the dissertation process, others through manuscript and presentation development and collaborative research projects. Along with intentions for equal work came outcomes of equal gain. The mentees all noted career gains

as a direct result of the mentorship relationship. The mentors discussed career gains in the form of completing tenure and promotion expectations, further refining mentorship strategies, and developing positive collegial relationships. Finally, collaboration was a major mechanism for growth and relational mutuality noted by the participants. One of the mentees discussed engagement with collaboration resulting in major publication gains, another noted gains in comfort and confidence from collaboration. In a surprising twist, despite the stated value of collaboration, another mentee discussed a missed opportunity for collaboration because of his mentor's disinterest in his research topic.

The concept of influence was extracted from participant accounts of modeling, which the mentees emphasized as a key aspect of the relationship. It seemed the mentors did not only provide transparent information that was valuable, but they also personified the many objective and subjective tasks and roles of a counselor educator: research, advocacy, leadership, supervision, and advanced practice. Expanding the role of mentor beyond simply career roles, the mentees all endorsed their experience of being authentically supported and cared about in the relationship. This felt experience was likely the catalyst for the mentees (unanimous) intention to go on to mentor others with the framework that was modeled by their respective mentors. Consequently, there is evidence to assume a sort of zest in these relationships. Zest is a term used within Relational Cultural Theory (RCT), a derivative theory of feminist theory, that refers to an energy created by the relationship that results in the desire to create more similar relationships (Alvarez & Lazzari, 2016). Finally, it is a reasonable conclusion to draw that the mentors and mentees were carrying past harms with authority figures, previous mentors, opposite gender interactions, and restricted gender norms that were healed or at least positively changed by the relationships.

Sub-Question One

What are the unique contributions of feminist mentors for future male counselor educators?

Harden et al., (2009) identified a learning barrier for men rooted in heteronormative cultural beliefs about women that amplifies the false idea of women's lack of power and dissuades men from choosing female mentors. This resulted in the direct call for phenomenological research that explored the relational impact of female supervisors on their male supervisees (Mackinnon et al., 2011). This study provides information on the phenomenology of cross-gender mentorship that emphasizes positive outcomes for men which include but are not limited to career growth markers (publications, degree completion, job acquisition, practice and mastery of research tasks). More influential to the process was having a safe professional relationship that could hold the vulnerability and joy that is inherent in identity development. The difference was specifically noted by mentees and mentors alike which referenced past mentors that had expectations that were rigid or harsh rather than the flexible and nurturing qualities described by the mentees in this study.

This may present as an anomaly given popular opinion of feminism as man hating and the literature reporting men see their alignment with feminist principles as a loss (Wiley et al., 2013). None of the mentees discussed choosing their mentors based on feminist identification, but rather based on personality or acumen. However, their descriptions of feminism had been changed, perhaps as an influence of their mentor, to a more accurate description of a social justice and advocacy focus, rather than forcing a position of power over men. This provides initial evidence that the relational aspects that are quite natural for women may have positive impacts on men's identity development and accurate and helpful perceptions of feminism.

Sub-Question Two

How do the qualities of the feminist mentorship relationship differ or resemble traditional mentorship for male mentees?

What this study has identified as traditional mentorship may now be more accurately named as a progression of mentorship qualities and standards that have been improved by empirical findings throughout the last 20+ years. More traditional models appear to emphasize career/instrumental, psychosocial and sponsorship tasks in mentorship (Curtin et al., 2016). This study illustrates likenesses with career tasks including research and writing, as well as psychosocial tasks although relational may be a more fitting term. What is missing is a sponsorship focus which includes networking. The participants of this study did not discuss networking for power/status affiliation, but rather a focus on collaboration and building communities of learners. Sponsorship tasks in feminist mentorship may be in alignment with values and other people rather than with status attainment. Unlike traditional mentorship tasks of "showing the ropes" to mentees, the major tasks of feminist mentors include providing guidance, managing power, empowering professional self-identification, and modeling reflexive practice to students (Falender, 2009; Prouty Lyness & Helmeke, 2008).

Sub-Question Three

What unique qualities does feminist mentoring offer the field of counselor education?

Whalen and colleagues (2004) called for a systemic ethical change in counselor education to shift focus from the individual to an individual + social change lens. The participants discussed potentials for social change emerging from several constructs: the deconstruction of hierarchical power structures when appropriate, centering lived experiences as expertise, and the focus on community and collaboration. Men that enter counselor education programs are subject

to the same social constructions and constrictive masculinity norms as are the clients and students to which they will teach (Griffith & Cornish, 2018). When men are given conceptual and practical tools to deepen their understanding of how those norms operate and harm certain individuals, they are more capable of providing positive long-term influence. The research that illustrates the unique contributions of female mentors to their male mentees confirms previous research by Black and Magnuson (2005) who suggested that women build wide circles of influence that have broad and progressive implications for counselor education.

Discussion of Findings

This section provides a link between previous literature and the themes derived from the data analysis process. Specifically, the author provides discussion on how the current study supports and furthers existing literature related to feminist mentorship.

Theme One: An Evolution of the Mentorship Relationship

Use of the term evolution in this theme is multi-dynamic. Overall, it refers to the pairs describing a relationship that develops over time. Moreover, it refers to the concept of mentorship changing with the allowance of relational dynamics that embrace multiple contexts that the mentee belongs to. Lastly, it illustrates the evolution of professional identity that is augmented through the mentorship relationship.

Previous literature established that traditional mentorship outcomes commonly include higher salaries (Dreher & Cox, 1996) and more educational and career success (Brown et al., 2009; Johnson, 2002) and is focused on the growth of the mentee (Borders et al., 2012). Also, the literature suggested that mentorship arrangements are more likely to be initiated by the mentor who chooses a mentee based on compatibility with career interests and potential for productivity and success (Johnson, 2002). Additionally, traditional mentee tasks include assistance on

projects, accepting feedback, and demonstrating motivation and excellent communication, which biases the depiction of mentorship as a duty for mentors and a challenge for mentees. This study diverges from the previous literature and extends the scope of outcomes to include collegiality in career endeavors, mutual identity and career growth for the mentor and mentee, and the opportunity for professional friendship between women and men.

The findings of this theme extend previous findings on feminist mentorship from Alvarez & Lazzari (2016) who published a case study suggesting that feminist mentors utilize transparency, autonomy, and empowerment to encourage their mentee's to achieve unique statuses and abilities that are aligned with their authentic journey. The mentors in this study named an intention to help their mentee self-identify and focus on personal goals for advancement rather than assuming the position of assistant to their mentors.

Theme Two: Leveling the Unnecessary Hierarchy

This study begins to deconstruct the use of power in mentorship relationships. None of the participants negated the relevance of authority in their evaluative role. Rather, they discussed the negotiation of power that resulted from humility and humanity. Academic relationships are notoriously focused on maintaining an appropriate or clinical distance in order to protect the integrity of the relationship and reduce any risky dynamics that may emerge. The participants all discussed the meaningfulness of the relationship coming from their mentors authentic and at times vulnerable engagement. This is supported by an ethnographic account of feminist mentorship which explained that feminism provides a framework that is focused on transparency, self-disclosure, analysis of power, power-sharing, and demystification of processes in order to create positive social change (Humble et al., 2006).

In regard to power discourse, broaching is often considered to be foundational to diversity and inclusion in counselor education. Feminist mentors go beyond simply understanding and broaching the concept of power dynamics to understanding complexities of power in multiple contexts, management of many power-laden values and tasks and use strategies to intentionally reduce hierarchical dynamics (Arczynski & Morrow, 2017). These strategies to equalize power named by Arczynski & Morrow (2017) in their grounded theory study on feminist supervision were corroborated by the participants in the present study: self-disclosure, openness, collaboration, flexibility, reflexivity, and focusing on context. The outcomes of this feminist framework were named by mentees as de-identification with imposter syndrome, self-confidence, meaningful connection, and career advancement.

Theme Three: Expecting the Unexpected: Surprising Elements and Outcomes

The language used in this theme is meant to illustrate an essence that wound through each and all participant accounts, which is an essence of surprise. All participants were surprised by unique aspects or expressed surprise in unique ways but the tone of their account and frequently the language they used expressed surprise for unexpected outcomes. What seemed to be surprising about the relationship to the mentees was how their mentor wielded power. Given that popular beliefs of feminists as undercutting or emasculating men in order to be powerful, the men in this study may have felt surprised by witnessing feminism in action and feeling powerful and energized through the relationship. This style may have been difficult to predict given that feminist relationships are identified by relational qualities rather than a prescriptive set of techniques. Degges-White and colleagues (2013) outlined conceptually the feminist relationship developing through the process of demonstrated vulnerability and continued acceptance which allows students to abandon self-stigma and accelerate career growth. They went on to describe

the supervisor or mentor modeling a position of 'not knowing' in order to invite co-construction of knowledge. Participants in the study discussed this process with vivid likeness which confirms this dynamic in the feminist relationship and its unique contribution to outcomes.

Finally, the findings from this study provide disconfirmation but clarity of a conceptual warning often found in the cross-gender mentorship literature (Doughty & Leddick, 2007) of the risk of sexualized relations. It is perhaps the fact that the leader, the person with authoritative power in this relationship is a woman that offers a new dynamic that has not been explored empirically. The participant accounts in this study do not emphasize or even mention in most cases a sexualized dynamic, although the weight of the risk is certainly acknowledged when participants explain terms such as 'friendship' and express the fear of being 'misunderstood' when showing interest in collaboration and ongoing connection.

Implications for Counselor Education

This section outlines implications that can be drawn from the study. It is organized to first address implications for counselor education that are linked to the existing literature, then outlines implications for mentorship, and finally implications for leaders in higher education as well as recommendations for mentees. The implications can be applied to mentorship models, mentorship acquisition guidelines, departmental foci, and higher education systems reform.

Purgason et al., (2018) completed a Delphi study with leaders in the field of counselor education to determine the cohesiveness of perspectives on mentorship qualities between mentors and mentees. Purgason and colleagues named two limitations of their study. First, the Purgason et al. study had not addressed differences between masters and doctoral level mentorship. Second, the Purgason et al., (2018) study did not attend to specific multicultural understanding.

The current study was focused specifically on doctoral mentorship and included the impact of a multicultural lens of mentorship that matched the needs of male doctoral students with the abilities of female feminist mentors, thus providing basis to confirm and extend the results of Purgason and colleagues (2018) study. This begins to delineate the impact that could occur by extending recommendations of feminist mentorship in counselor education, especially for male students. The male participants in this study had unanimous accounts of the positive impact of these mentorship relationships. They discussed outcomes that included career success, as well as personal appreciation and confidence an indication that the authentic presence of their mentor was transformative to seeing their personal power and the expansion of their relational repertoire.

Next, encouragement for feminist mentorship in counselor education programs could be initiated by adopting, then expanding an operational definition established by Briggs & Pehrsson (2008) of research mentorship in counselor education as

> A complex dynamic relationship that occurs within an academic setting. The mentor, a more experienced researcher, offers both relational and instructional support to the protégé in research generation and collaboration and in professional development. The relationship is goal and task-oriented, and primarily serves the protégé's needs, with secondary benefit for the mentor, who gains a research collaborator (p. 103).

This definition should be expanded to include the specific feminist aspects that were identified in this study. I suggest the following: feminist mentorship in counselor education is a complex dynamic relationship that occurs within an academic setting. The mentor, a more experienced researcher, offers instructional support and relational qualities such as transparency, power-sharing, authenticity, and attunement to the individual needs of the mentee. The relationship is

goal and task-oriented and serves primarily the needs of the mentee with secondary benefit for the mentor through collaboration, new ideas, and network expansion. Encouragement for mentorship relationships within counselor education to meet this definition would provide a consistent framework and expectations to support mentorship success.

Finally, for nearly twenty years, the call for mentorship progression has been to tailor mentorship models to fit departmental mission (Johnson, 2002). I suggest that counselor education departments encourage culture shifting around mentorship. This includes strength-building through inter-disciplinary collaborations and the embedded use of research teams among faculty, doctoral, and masters students within departments and beyond- perhaps expanding across programs within the university as well as across universities. This approach would exponentially expand the scope and capacity of the field of counselor education. Some of the participants in this study discussed their experience of cross-university mentorship which meant elimination of problematic evaluative roles for the mentor and opportunities for rich experiences and learning for the mentee. For both mentor and mentee, it meant expansion of collaborative networks by bringing more colleagues into the fold.

Implications for Mentorship

This study provides several important implications for distinct mentorship frameworks. First, it has extended empirical evidence for the efficacy and fit of feminist mentorship. The original feminist mentoring model presented by Fassinger in 1997 included six core elements a) re-thinking power/power sharing through mutuality, respect, equity, and open communication; b) a relational emphasis with importance placed on balancing personal and professional for both mentee and mentor marked by self-disclosure introduced by the mentor; c) collaboration between mentor and mentee, with others, and to increase praxis or community involvement; d) focused on

diversity and elevating marginalized voices; e) integrates non-dichotomous thinking or building contextual knowledge; f) incorporates political analysis and actively challenges patriarchal values (as cited in Enns et al., 2004). The model was expanded to include multiculturalism; embracing examination of privilege and oppression, broaching multicultural issues, and emphasizing knowledge, products, and experiences created outside of majority culture to elevate marginalized populations (Benishek et al., 2004). The current study personifies each of these specific elements and offers more perspective on the process of feminist mentorship. I encourage mentors to adopt a feminist lens, using each of the above elements to grow and expand existing mentorship abilities and to confidently influence future generations of mentors.

Next, it has also extended necessary empirical evidence for Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) as an appropriate mentorship model (Alvarez & Lazzari, 2016; Purgason et al., 2016; Walker, 2006). Based on the original philosophies of feminism and refined to emphasize relational and multicultural aspects of the relationship, the tenets of RCT are mutuality, openness, authenticity, and zest (Alvarez & Lazarri, 2016). This study provides substantiation for RCT as a mentorship framework in counselor education (Alvarez & Lazarri, 2016; Purgason et al., 2016; Walker, 2006) and likely beyond in other relationally-based fields such as social work, nursing, psychology, and so forth.

Recommendations for Mentees

Based on the existing mentorship literature and on participant accounts of successful mentoring experiences, mentees are encouraged to choose mentors on the basis of exemplary fit. Considerations for determining good fit should include compatibility and interest in research topic areas, communication style, similar value sets, and reciprocity of strengths and limitations. Reciprocity refers to a determination of whether the challenges brought by one individual will be

balanced by the strengths of the other. Mentees are encouraged to consider whether differences in demographics can be managed through their mentor's multicultural humility or competency with diversity, inclusion, and equity matters or skill in broaching and an authentic approach. In that way cross-gender options should not be ruled out, nor should differences in race, ethnicity, sexuality, or ability be a considered exclusively but in addition to several other factors. Embracing cultural differences as learning opportunities will undoubtedly have wider implications for awareness and growth.

Recommendations for Leaders in Higher Education

Foundationally, mentorship is considered to be an accelerant for academic and career satisfaction and success and should be developed and encouraged in higher education systems (Johnson, 2002). To promote the intentional practice of mentorship, rather than making mentorship a required role within education systems, consider the identification and promotion of individuals who are well-suited to mentoring roles. Consider incentivizing mentorship by including high quality mentorship as an option for promotion and tenure status.

The elements of mentorship culture that were identified through the current study are an emphasis on collaboration and research teams, creating space for innovation and risk taking, and having open discussions with students about research interests, ideas, and methodology. This culture was fostered by mentors that were celebrated for having relational qualities and a social justice focus. Furthermore, the mentorship elements identified should be developed and written within departments and institutions as training curriculum to train mentors in successful relational practices.

Lastly, consider cultivating a culture of mentorship in which faculty and students are encouraged and rewarded to explore compatible and reciprocal research collaborations within

departments and university wide. Generally, mentorship collaboration is conducted between a single student and faculty member. Feminist mentorship seeks to influence growth through wider circles of influence including inter-disciplinary teams and research teams across programs, universities, nations, and globally.

Limitations

As with any qualitative study, the goal of this study was not generalizability which limits the applicability of the findings to any other specific mentoring relationship. Additionally, variables such as years of experience, training in mentorship, or ascription to any specific feminist framework were not controlled between mentors which affects the behaviors of mentors and are not predictable. Likewise. the individual factors between each mentee were not controlled and inevitably impacted the relationship and do not provide generalizability of the findings for other male doctoral students.

Two other potential limitations of the study are sample size and recruitment timeline. The sample size of six total participants or three participant pairs is within the guidelines for researchers new to IPA but will likely not provide data saturation and findings may have been more descriptive with a larger sample size. The participant sample for this study was recruited at two different times over the course of nearly two years. This can be considered a limitation in consistency of the research process, but is unlikely to have impacted the integrity of the findings, as the research process was further refined between iterations of recruitment.

Another limitation to the study is the diversity of representatives. Multicultural competence was assumed to be a quality that the mentors fostered. However, because of the homogeneity of participant race and ethnicity, the voices of black and brown feminist mentors

are not represented. Likewise, all mentees in the study were white, and therefore mentee perspectives from diverse and intersecting identities are missing from the inquiry.

The last known limitation is the unclear influence of the mentors' training and academic background. All of the mentors hold academic status and were trained in rigorous research training departments. The applicability of their ability for departments and mentors that do not focus on research productivity is therefore unrepresented.

Directions for Future Research

Qualitative research was an important step forward in the counselor education mentorship literature as it gives storied explanations of what, how, and why questions that had not previously been answered. Future research with this sample will explore and compare specific mentee and mentor experiences and will further explain the lived experiences of feminist mentorship.

Lessons learned from this study illustrate several interesting areas for exploration such as men's perspectives on feminism following feminist mentorship which was not a distinct research question in this study. Another direction would be to investigate how mentors' philosophies are shaped by their previous mentoring relationships or by their doctoral institutions' emphasis on mentorship. Finally, a similar study with mentors of diverse intersecting identities would certainly add important information.

In terms of new directions for research, phenomenological or mixed methods research could explore the differences between feminist mentorship and other mentorship frameworks. A comparison study of men's and women's experiences with feminist mentoring would provide an illustrative explanation of the potential gender differences or similarities. Lastly, a longitudinal study of mentorship outcomes or relationships over time would be illuminating.

Conclusion

My intention in conducting this study was to bring to light what exists in the literature gap on cross-gender mentorship. I believed that one reason for the research gap may be dominant societal narratives about the charged relationship between women and men and their pre-judged societal roles. This is a topic that has clearly been avoided, and as a counselor educator, committed to multicultural inclusiveness, I was not satisfied.

Pushing the boundary of these societal beliefs was an intention in order to encourage important systemic change. Using a feminist framework, which utilizes a position of privilege to create in-depth analysis of power structures, this study zoomed-in empirically, to investigate the relationship. This allowed me to analyze what the power structures actually looked like in feminist mentorship relationships so that we could get past discourse of these relationships being sexualized (Johnson & Huwe, 2002; Schwiebert et al., 1999) or that feminists look to gain power by disempowering men. Contrary to these beliefs, the participants in the current study highlighted a mutually empowered relationship that created innovative and inspired mentors and mentees.

This study is particularly relevant to counselor education as the theoretical tenets of feminism are often elevated as mission objectives within the field, to amplify focus on multiculturalism, social justice, and advocacy (Whalen, et al., 2004). Additionally, counselor education has been called to embrace women as leaders in higher education and in society as a whole (Black & Magnuson, 2005; Levitt, 2010).

This study reached two major accomplishments. First, I was able to identify and illustrate themes that bring the meaning and practice of feminist mentorship for participants to life and

further, glean implications and recommendations for counselor education. Perhaps more importantly, though, this study creates major in-roads for mentorship to be explored further.

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

November 29, 2018

Dr. Jodi Tangen
Counselor Education and Supervision

Re: IRB Determination of Exempt Human Subjects Research:
Protocol #HE19108, "Exploring Feminist mentorship in cross-gender mentoring relationships"

Co-investigator(s) and research team: Erin Hagen, James Korcuska, Amy Runcorn, Jessica Danielson (Northern State)
Date of Exempt Determination: 11/29/2018 Expiration Date: 11/28/2021
Study site(s): varied locations
Sponsor: n/a

The above referenced human subjects research project has been determined exempt (category #2b) in accordance with federal regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects). This determination is based on the protocol submission (received 11/26/2018).

Please also note the following:
• If you wish to continue the research after the expiration, submit a request for recertification several weeks prior to the expiration.
• The study must be conducted as described in the approved protocol. Changes to this protocol must be approved prior to initiating, unless the changes are necessary to eliminate an immediate hazard to subjects.
• Notify the IRB promptly of any adverse events, complaints, or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others related to this project.
• Report any significant new findings that may affect the risks and benefits to the participants and the IRB.

Research records may be subject to a random or directed audit at any time to verify compliance with IRB standard operating procedures.

Thank you for your cooperation with NDSU IRB procedures. Best wishes for a successful study.
Sincerely,

Kristy Shirley

Kristy Shirley, CIP, Research Compliance Administrator

For more information regarding IRB Office submissions and guidelines, please consult http://www.ndsu.edu/research/integrity_compliance/irb/. This Institution has an approved FederalWide Assurance with the Department of Health and Human Services: FWA00002439.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
NDSU Dept 4000 | PO Box 6050 | Fargo ND 58108-6050 | 701.231.8995 | Fax 701.231.8098 | ndsu.edu/irb
Shipping address: Research 1, 1735 NDSU Research Park Drive, Fargo ND 58102

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

School of Education
Dept. 2625 PO BOX 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050
701.231.7202

Exploring Feminist Mentorship in Cross-Gender Mentoring Relationships.

This study is being conducted by:

Erin Hagen, MEd	701.220.8714	erin.hagen@ndsu.edu
Brenda Hall, PhD		brenda.hall@ndsu.edu
Jodi Tangen, PhD	701.231.7676	jodi.tangen@ndsu.edu
James Korcuska, PhD	701.231.6296	james.korcuska@ndsu.edu
Ann Burnett, PhD		ann.burnett@ndsu.edu

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are either (a) a cisgender female feminist/womanist mentor currently working in a CACREP-accredited counselor education program, or (b) a cisgender male who has engaged in cross-gender feminist mentorship while in your counselor education doctoral program. There will be approximately 6-8 participants invited to participate in this research study. These participants will be cisgender female mentors and cisgender male mentees that have engaged in feminist/womanist mentorship in the field of counselor education.

The major purpose of this study is threefold: (a) to explore the experiences of cisgender males' previous experiences of mentorship in their doctoral program by cisgender female feminist mentors, (b) to understand the experiences of cisgender females providing feminist mentorship to male doctoral mentees, and (c) to explore how feminist orientation impacts the quality of the mentorship relationship in cross-gender pairs.

You are invited to participate in one 30-60 minute individual phone/video interview. During the interview you will be asked questions regarding your mentorship experiences, either as the mentor or as the mentee. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed (written out) for information interpretation. You are invited to choose the most convenient location for your interview; private spaces (such as your work office, a library study room, or an office at your university) are encouraged to keep your information confidential.

During the interview, you may experience a small amount of discomfort due to the questions that are asked about your personal experiences. In addition, privacy cannot be promised; however, we

will keep private all research records that identify you. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research, but the researcher has taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known risks to you.

You are not expected to get any benefit from being in this research study. However, the research study will increase the knowledge available about the experiences of feminist mentorship and cross-gender mentorship in counselor education.

Your participation in this research is your choice. If you decide to participate in this study, you may change your mind and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are already entitled. Instead of being in this research study, you can choose not to participate. If you withdraw before the research is over, your information will be removed at your request and we will not collect additional information about you.

Before you decide whether you would like to participate in this study, please ask any questions that come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact Erin Hagen at 701.220.8714 or erin.hagen@ndsu.edu.

You have rights as a research participant. All research with human participants is reviewed by a committee called the *Institutional Review Board (IRB)* which works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions about your rights, an unresolved question, a concern or complaint about this research you may contact the IRB office at 701.231.8995, toll-free at 855-800-6717 or via email (ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu).

You are freely making a decision whether to be in this research study. Your consent to participate in this study indicates:

1. you have read and understood this consent form
2. you have had your questions answered, and
3. you have decided to be in the study.

By participating in this interview, you are providing consent for responses to be used in this study. You will be provided a copy of this consent form for your records, prior to the interview.