SCHOOL COUNSELORS' USE OF MOVEMENT IN SMALL GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING SESSIONS

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Amy Louise Martin Geinert

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Amy Louise Martin Geinert

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SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

Dr. Carol Buchholz Holland

Chair

Dr. Jeanette Hoffman

Dr. Jenny Linker

Dr. Jodi Tangen

Approved:

04/08/2024	Dr. Jodi Tangen
Date	Department Chair

ABSTRACT

Although there is a research base for incorporating movement into teaching and classroom lessons, there currently is a lack of research on incorporating movement into school counseling practices. The present mixed methods exploratory study aimed to identify school counselor attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions. A concurrent embedded strategy was utilized to survey practicing school counselors in the United States. By sharing requests through the ASCA Member Community and state school counselor association communications, study participants were invited to complete an anonymous survey online. Study participants indicated they find incorporating movement useful in individual and small group sessions. Although participants self-report higher levels of knowledge on incorporating movement into counseling sessions at schools, most participants had not received any training on the topic. Recommendations include providing training for practicing school counselors and school counselors-in-training regarding how to incorporate movement into sessions and its benefits. Focus of training should also include advocacy efforts and how to address identified barriers.

helped alleviate some of the mom guilt over missing time with them. From a young age, you reminded me to "hold my head high and be proud to be a Martin". With that confidence, I was able to enter a doctoral program and pursue a PhD.

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CHAPTER I

As school counselors enter their practice, they are equipped with many skills and a general knowledge base about topics such as counseling methods, theories, and group counseling. Counseling skills are typically sedentary in nature, e.g., how to sit with welcoming body language, and how to speak to hold space for clients. While counselors-in-training learn about human development over the lifespan, there isn't always a focus on how clients take in information. Even though the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has within its eight core curriculum areas both human growth and development and counseling and helping relationships, there is no standard or competency specific to incorporating movement into counseling sessions (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, 2023).

Educational best practices have emphasized the importance of incorporating movement (Erwin et al., 2011; Jensen & McConchie, 2020; Martin & Murtaugh, 2015). It is not uncommon to find articles about flexible seating (Fedewa & Erwin, 2011), the effect of physical activity on learning and academic performance (Jensen & McConchie, 2020), ways teachers can add more movement in their classrooms (Armstrong, 2016; Jensen & McConchie, 2020) and the positive impact of movement on student self-regulation, mood, and behavior (Jensen & McConchie, 2020). Research exists on the positive impact movement has on learning, creativity, and general health, but it has yet to be applied to the implications for counseling.

Research has proven that vigorous exercise has a positive effect on mental health, even lowering symptoms of depression and anxiety. There are even counseling therapies that incorporate movement (sometimes called creative arts therapies), such as dance therapy, and yoga-infused practices (Perryman et al., 2019; Rakusin, 1990; Schreiber-Willnow & Seidler,

2013). Although extended vigorous activity has been researched and proven to be effective, there has yet to be a study completed that shows the incorporation of movement in counseling.

Purpose of the Study

This exploratory mixed methods survey sought to identify school counselor attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding the use of movement. The study focused on the use of any movement, including short-term, because much focus has been placed on vigorous exercise or physical activity and the benefits for mental health. Educational research has shown that movement is effective in classrooms, so the question remains: do school counselors believe it is effective in their practice? Since research has shown the benefits of movement in the classroom, this study focused on individual and small-group sessions rather than classroom instruction (sometimes referred to as classroom guidance).

Results of the current study can be used to provide professional development for school counselors, including rationale for and ways to include movement. This study was exploratory; the first of its kind in identifying school counselor practices, beliefs, and attitudes about incorporating movement into their own practices. As such, it can serve as a base from which to conduct further research in the future.

Statement of the Problem

In education there is a research base for incorporating movement into teaching. This lends itself to the incorporation of movement into classroom instruction, but not necessarily into individual and small group counseling sessions. School counselors with whom this researcher has visited acknowledge the need to incorporate movement into lessons at the elementary level, but many reported not considering the implications for middle and high school classroom lessons. Research supports utilizing movement for maintaining focus (Jensen, 2005) and

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encouraging creative thinking. However, when talking with school counselors, the main reason for utilizing movement in individual sessions was to distract clients in the hope to encourage clients to talk more openly about their feelings.

Counseling skills can focus on sedentary behavior. Books discussing counseling skills and foundations for student-practitioners can focus on how to sit, demonstrate open body language, and the nonverbal communication between counselor and client. Movement, especially short-term, is often overlooked in counseling, demonstrated by the lack of research on the topic. When searching for movement in counseling, one will find research on somatic therapies and the effects of exercise on mental health. There is a lack of research tying the benefits of movement to school counseling sessions. Although there is research showing the benefits of movement in education (Erwin et al., 2011; Fedewa & Erwin, 2011; Jensen & McConchie, 2020) and movement in adulthood (Grafton, 2020), the link has yet to be made to individual and small-group counseling in the school setting.

Significance of the Study

This exploratory study examined current school counselor beliefs and practices. The study can be used to inform school counselor practice and the education of counselors-in-training, such as teaching school counselors ways to incorporate movement into their practice. The study findings may be used to develop professional development for school counselors regarding the rationale for and how to use movement in their practice.

In addition to training, this study has the capacity to serve as the base for further research. The results of the study add to the foundation of future studies in school counseling. This ranges from the number of respondents of surveys in school counseling-specific studies to the practice of using online surveys to gain insight into school counseling practices. While searching for

current school counseling-specific best practices, it was found that there can be a large discrepancy in number of participants, a lack of detail included in how long surveys are open, and the necessary number of respondents in online surveys. While this study is not comprehensive enough to set the standard, it adds to the base of research in the school counseling field. Additionally, by providing a baseline of counselor beliefs and actions, further research studies can be conducted to add to the knowledge base in this area. While the study focused on school counseling, the findings and future research may be applied across all counseling specialties. Ultimately, the hope of conducting this research was to benefit student clients. With more school counselors informed and more research available on this topic, even better and holistic counseling can be delivered to student clients.

Research Questions

The exploratory study addressed the following four research questions:

1. What are school counselor attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?
2. What barriers do school counselors encounter that make it difficult to incorporate movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?
3. What impact has COVID-19 had on school counselor use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?
4. Have school counselors received training regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

Limitations of the Study

Although focused on learning more about school counselor use of movement, the current study was exploratory in nature and not comprehensive in its scope. Current participants were

limited to school counselors practicing in the United States. Also, no correlation was drawn

between participant demographic information, such as educational level or gender, and their

responses. Demographic information was collected solely to shed light on the overall participant

makeup. At the time of the study, the survey was only available in English, so survey

participants had to be able to read English. The survey was not available to all

credentialed/licensed school counselors in the United States and its territories. As is listed in

Chapter III, the survey was posted on the American School Counselor Association (ASCA)

Member Community and sent to state and territory school counseling associations for

dissemination. School counselors who were not a member of ASCA (and utilizing the online

ASCA Member Community) or a member of their state school counseling association, were not

invited to participate. Because of this, there were some school counselors who did not receive the

invitation to participate, and the results of the study cannot be generalized to all school

counselors. including those not members of professional school counselor organizations.

Definition of Terms

Movement: the act or process of moving *especially*: change of place or position or posture

(Merriam-Webster, 2024)

Individual counseling: counseling session including one student, 1:1 counseling

Small group counseling: counseling session held with a small group of students, typically

3-10 students. Small-group counseling often occurs weekly for a specified amount of time (e.g.,

4-6 sessions)

Summary

This chapter introduced the purpose of the present exploratory study, which is to

understand the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of school counselors regarding the use of

movement in small group and individual counseling sessions. The problem of lack of training

and research on the use of movement in individual and small group counseling was also

addressed. In addition, the chapter reviewed the significance of the study which includes

implications for future practice, training, and research. Lastly, the four study research questions,

limitations of the study, and definition of key terms were addressed. A review of the relevant

literature is addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

Physical movement and exercise have been incorporated for many years in academic settings. There have been studies regarding physical education classes and their impact on academic achievement and the general impact of movement on learning (Hennick, 2017; Mahar et al., 2006; Mulrine et al., 2008; Petrigna et al., 2022; Stapp & Lambert, 2020). Authors have discussed the impact of movement on creativity, engagement, and brain activity (Beilock, 2015; Paul, 2021). Research integrating movement into counseling exists, but has often revolved around dance therapy, yoga therapy, or the effects of long-term, vigorous exercise on mental health (Cooper, 2020; Ratey & Hagerman, 2008; Smith & Merwin, 2021). While helpful, these miss the mark for broad applications in school counseling. For years movement has been applied to PK-12 classrooms; why not apply it to the field of school counseling as well?

Use of Movement

Authors and researchers have been writing about movement and its effect on brain function, mood, and thinking for years. Movement has been shown to improve mental health (Cooper, 2020; Smith & Merwin, 2021), increase creativity (Beilock, 2015; Paul, 2021) and enhance cognitive functioning (Beilock, 2015; Paul, 2021). The type and form of movement varies from study to study and book to book. Some authors focus on exercise, while others focus on physical movement. Regardless of the term, findings are similar: moving the body affects the mind.

In her book about "thinking outside of the brain", Paul (2021) cited numerous studies that support movement being used to enhance cognitive functioning. Paul referenced a medical professional who had the idea to move while reviewing CT scans. Dr. Jeff Fidler, a radiologist at Mayo Clinic, designed a study along with a colleague to test his hypothesis that he was able to

interpret X-rays more accurately when he was moving. Dr. Fidler found that accuracy increased

from 85% of those who were seated while interpreting X-ray images to 99% for those who

walked while interpreting X-rays. These findings were substantiated at the University of

Maryland Medical Center and the Naval Medical Center in VA (Paul, 2021). Even with these

findings, there was pushback to incorporating this practice into other professionals' days.

Beilock (2015) also faced hesitation to incorporate movement with learning, to which she

countered, "This stationary model of education is counterproductive, because we tend to learn

through movement and engaging with people and things in our environment" (p. 49).

Just as moving while tackling a difficult task or activity has been shown to be effective,

taking a break and incorporating movement can also be helpful. Beilock (2015) reported

"Stepping completely away from a problem you are stuck on can increase your probability of

success. Walking away from a puzzle or challenge increases the likelihood that new solutions

will bubble to the surface of your mind" (pp. 231-232). Thus, movement in any stage of

problem-solving, solution-finding, or simply considering a new concept can be helpful. Paul

(2021) referenced examples of professionals coming up with new ideas while running. There

appears to be a "sweet spot" so to speak regarding physical exertion and mental functioning.

There is a freeing of the mind and an openness to the world while running, but with too much

intensity, this can be lost. With the right mix of effort and movement, creativity is enhanced, and

people can think outside of the box.

In *How the Body Knows Its Mind* (Beilock, 2015), studies showed that study participants

were able to think more creatively when walking. The researcher discussed the Baoding balls

that are often found on office desks. Beilock stated "The unexpected benefit of creative thinking

that comes from moving our body reveals the importance of physical actions to improve

performance at work" (p. 73). While it may be considered a distraction by some, this example adds to the support for the use of movement when working and learning.

Movement, especially play, has also been proven important for children's development (Mader, 2022). Children learn from doing. Research has shown the effect of play on the brain and its functioning. As children play:

> their brains are activated in a way that can change neuron connections in the prefrontal cortex, which impact emotional regulation and problem-solving. Play can also release chemicals in the brain, including oxytocin (which helps regulate emotions and supports social skills) and dopamine (a neurotransmitter that impacts memory, motivation, attention and mood) (Mader, 2022, para. 12)

The American Academy of Pediatrics (2007) agreed that movement and physical activity are important for children's brain development. They reported that play "is essential to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth" (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2007, p. 183). Physical activity and exercise have also been linked to benefits of neuroplasticity and neurogenesis in adults. Ratey and Manning (2014) referenced studies that link exercise to brain growth and prevention of cognitive impairment. The authors also referenced a study that looked at over one million men in the military. Those with higher fitness levels had higher IQs and cognitive abilities (Ratey & Manning, 2014). Exercise has cognitive benefits, not just physical.

Physical activity has been shown to improve mental health. One need not look far to find research that links physical activity to improved mental health (Cooper, 2020; Ratey & Hagerman, 2008; Smith & Merwin, 2021; Weir, 2011). Cooper (2020) discussed studies that have shown exercise (at moderate to vigorous levels) can lower the development of depression in

adults and the development of anxiety in children and adults. By meeting the recommended weekly 150-minute physical activity guideline, people can reduce their risk of developing mental health disorders and ease symptoms during depressive episodes. Research has even shown lower suicidal ideation in teens who have been bullied and exercised regularly compared to those who exercised one or less days. Generally speaking, the more someone exercises and engages in regular physical activity, the lower their risk of developing mental health conditions (Smith & Merwin, 2021). While much research has been devoted to aerobic activity and its link to lowered incidences of depression and anxiety (Ratey & Hagerman, 2008), there are emerging studies that examined additional types of exercise such as resistance training and yoga (Smith & Merwin, 2021).

An emerging need in research is how to best incorporate exercise into counseling (Weir, 2011). Mental health practitioners (as of yet) do not have guidelines on what exercise, what intensity, and what timeframe works best to treat each mental health condition (Weir, 2011). Along with vigorous physical activity improving mental health, a simple shift in facial movement can also help. Even moving our body to display a different emotion (for example, smiling) can help us feel different. "When smiling, you feel happier and recover from a painful experience faster" (Beilock, 2015, p. 229).

Related to recovering from painful experiences, is the topic of trauma. Author Bessel van der Kolk (2014) discussed the topic of trauma and its effects on the mind and body in his book *The Body Keeps the Score*. Throughout the book, van der Kolk shared research that has influenced the world of medicine, psychology, and mental health. Instead of focusing solely on the mind, van der Kolk encouraged a more holistic approach. Many of his patients, who had experienced trauma, reported not having body awareness, and could not feel areas of their

bodies. Van der Kolk further explained that "Trauma victims cannot recover until they become familiar with and befriend the sensations in their bodies. Being frightened means that you live in a body that is always on guard. Angry people live in angry bodies" (p. 102). Movement is integral to helping those who have experienced trauma and have gotten stuck in the fight or flight mode. It is important to note that the mention of movement is not only geared towards adults in the book; van der Kolk also addressed the need for trauma-informed care in schools. Van der Kolk suggested that schools not cut out movement for students, stating that "the last things that should be cut from school schedules are chorus, physical education, recess, and anything else involving movement, play and joyful engagement" (p. 88).

Movement in Education

Much research regarding the integration of movement in education began with the introduction of physical education into schools. Since the 1950s, there has been research regarding movement and the importance of having that incorporated into school settings (Hennick, 2017; Mulrine et al., 2008; Petrigna et al., 2022; Stapp & Lambert, 2020). Interestingly enough, research has again emerged regarding the importance of movement and functioning in students. Readers of this dissertation may have heard about schools that withhold recess for students with behavioral struggles and reduce (or eliminate) recess and physical education in favor of more seated academic time. Researchers are sharing rationale for movement, linking it to improved cognitive functioning and focus (Beilock, 2015; Paul, 2021). Resources such as GoNoodle (gonoodle.com) and PBS' Kids in Motion (PBS & WBGH, 2024) are used in classrooms to incorporate brain breaks and movement. Students can dance, sing, and move around while learning about a variety of topics.

Research has shown that movement allows people to think more creatively, it helps people attend more fully to each other, to the task at hand. Paul (2021) stated "By moving our bodies in certain ways, that is, we're immediately able to think more intelligently" (p. 45). For example, Beilock (2015) discussed one study that proved the benefits of allowing students to move while completing math questions. There was no doubt in the findings that people were able to complete more problems and answer more questions correctly when they were allowed to move, than when they had to be seated and make no movement. Adding movement to activities is shown to help children understand what they are reading and is linked to higher recall. For example, Art Glenburg conducted studies at Arizona State University which involved children in different groups reading stories. Some children were instructed to act out events in stories. Other children were instructed to reread the sentences. The children in the group that included acting out the story were able to recall more parts of the story and had a higher level of understanding than the other group. The notion of recalling information when allowed to move is not unique to Glenburg's work. The creators of the math program "Math Dance" understood that movement paired with math work encourages higher understanding and recall also. As Beilock offered about the program "when we move, we often remember concepts and ideas better than when we stand still" (2015, p. 60).

A study conducted by Mahar et al. (2006) which incorporated a specific 10-minute physical activity program in elementary classrooms noted an improvement in on-task behavior after physical movement. Further research studies have substantiated these results. In addition to improving behavior, physical activity in the classroom and integrated in curriculum has been shown to have a positive impact on grades and improve learning (Hennick, 2017; Mulrine et al.,

2008; Petrigna et al., 2022). Stapp and Lambert (2020) found that incorporating mindfulness-based yoga in classrooms increases body awareness, and aids in brain and motor development.

While some research has pointed to vigorous activity activating learning and thinking, there is research focused on flexible seating, and options for standing, walking, or moving as needed in the classroom (Paul, 2021). In *The Motion Quotient*, Hennick (2017) urged educators to allow students to stand at their desks, take exercise breaks, and move whenever possible. "Lesson energizers" (Mulrine et al., 2008) can be used for the whole class, not just certain students. Ideas included how to incorporate slap counting in social studies and math curricula. Movement does not have to take up a lot of time and space, as shown by the following example: students have been allowed to stand up during transition times (especially when students do not transition between classes) and push down on their desks - extending their arms completely (Mulrine et al., 2008).

ASCD (formerly Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also guided educators to take a more holistic and integrated view of students and education. Together, these organizations developed the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model with the goal to "improve children's social, emotional, and academic development" (ASCD Healthy Schools Toolkit, 2024, p.6). The model addressed needs within the school and in the community and encourages a collaborative approach. At the center of the model is the Whole Child Approach to Education, which focused not only on the academic needs of the students, but the overall health and development of students and educators. The five tenets of the Whole Child Approach include: *healthy*, *safe*, *engaged*, *supported*, and *challenged* (ASCD, 2024*)*. Within the *supported* tenet, there is support for having school counselors available for students, especially to address academic, social, and

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emotional needs. Further moving toward a more holistic view of students, the ASCD (2024) stated that for the tenet of *healthy*, all aspects of a student's health should be addressed. This includes physical, emotional, social, and mental needs.

<center>**Counselor Training**</center>

When one pictures what "counseling" looks like, it likely invokes a picture of a seated activity. Whether it is a client laying on a couch or sitting in a chair, the client and counselor are typically both seated. This can be potentially linked to counselor training. Training often emphasizes body language of the counselor (and being aware of the counselee or client body language). Training programs teach counseling trainees how to sit with open shoulders, place feet on the ground, and use minimal encouragers (such as "mm hmm" and head nods) to show the client they are listening. When counseling trainees are taught how to sit and have open body language, they are introduced to mirroring their clients and making them feel more comfortable based on body language and body movement. Typically, the focus is on being seated in a chair and practicing that body language rather than incorporating any movement (Ivey et al., 2018).

In counseling skills courses, counseling trainees are educated on micro skills such as questioning, summarizing, and reflecting feelings (Ivey et al., 2018). Counseling students have been taught about how far they should sit from their clients, their nonverbal communication skills, and how to attend to what their clients are communicating. Much of the training revolves around verbal and nonverbal communication, and little attention (if any) is given to movement in sessions. If one does find mention of movement in counselor training materials, it is likely in reference to client self-care and how to incorporate movement outside of the session. For example, the authors of counseling skills training book *Intentional Interviewing and Counseling* (Ivey et al., 2018) mentioned that physical exercise helps improve mental health. Ivey et al. then

addressed how clients can be encouraged to incorporate exercise, the arts, and taking a "nature break" (p. 50), but this was all outside of the counseling session.

Readers find these same themes in counseling theory and application books. Murphy (2015) taught readers how to successfully implement solution-focused theory in schools. Most of the book focused on the verbiage used and application of the theory. Readers learned how to verbally communicate with their clients, but there was no mention of movement incorporation within the counseling session. If the reader wanted to incorporate movement, it would be on their own rather than guidelines or hints on how to do so. Readers who picked up the book *Neuroplasticity: A Cognitive Behavioral Approach to Anxiety and Procrastination* (Bruscella, 2019) would find worksheets to complete to address their anxiety and hopefully find a cure to their procrastination habits. There are numerous worksheets to complete that lead the reader through the cognitive behavioral approach, but no incorporation of physical movement. Readers would be instructed to focus on their physical responses to triggers and identify what is happening in their bodies, but no instruction on how to utilize movement is provided. These two examples demonstrate the continued sedentary nature of counseling: focus on training is sitting with clients, theoretical applications still heavily rely on worksheets and language-focused training. This is not to say there is not a helpful base, but with little to no training on how to incorporate movement into their practices, counselors are left to figure it all out on their own.

Use of Movement in Counseling

There are some notable exceptions to this lack of movement integration, including Impact Therapy and Dance/Movement Therapy. It should be noted that these are two therapeutic approaches, requiring additional training and specific to the individual approaches. Impact Therapy brings together aspects of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, Transactional Analysis,

Gestalt, and Reality Therapy (Jacobs & Schimmel, 2013). Within Impact Therapy, counselors utilize creative approaches such as props and movement to "make concepts more concrete … to heighten awareness … to dramatize a point . . . to speed up the counseling process . . . to enhance learning because people are visual learners… to enhance learning because people learn through experience … to focus the session" (Jacobs & Schimmel, 2013, pp. 12-13). In their book explaining the Impact Therapy approach, the authors included a full chapter devoted to using movement in counseling. The chapter described using movement to show progress, discuss the fear of change, and to demonstrate themes the counselor is seeing in sessions. Examples included having a client stand in the middle of the room and asking them to move to the right or left to demonstrate the choice they would like to make and having the client follow the counselor as they walk in circles, demonstrating the need to find direction. The use of movement in this therapeutic approach is intentional. The beginning of the book described some theoretical approaches that could utilize the approach, but it was meant to be a specific approach and not randomly incorporated with other theories.

Samuel Gladding (1992) discussed the application of dance and movement in counseling in *Counseling as an Art: The Creative Arts in Counseling*. In his work, he also noted the lack of movement in counseling stating "despite the importance society places on dance and movement, these two action-oriented artistic forms are often neglected aspects of counseling" (p. 28). Movement-based therapies, such as yoga-infused practices and dance and movement therapies focus on movement as an intervention and assessment technique. The American Dance Therapy Association website listed the definition of dance/movement therapy "as the psychotherapeutic use of movement to promote emotional, social, cognitive and physical integration of the individual" (American Dance Therapy Association, 2020a). Movement (primarily through

dance) is used to address a myriad of client presenting concerns, including self-esteem, improving communication, and identifying patterns of behavior (American Dance Therapy Association, 2020b). While not its own modality with a unique association, yoga-infused therapy is also practiced. Authors discussed how to incorporate yoga into psychotherapy, especially to improve breath and body-mind connection (Sciarrino & Ellis, 2016). Practitioners may come from a variety of backgrounds with various theoretical approaches and utilize yoga to improve mindfulness in their client.

Additionally, somatic therapies are gaining more exposure and are being utilized more often. Somatic therapy is described as "a therapy that aims to treat PTSD and other mental and emotional health issues through the connection of mind and body. This body-centric approach works by helping to release stress, tensions, and trauma from the body" (Resnick, 2023). Somatics therapies have been researched in treating clients diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder (Brom et al., 2017) and applied to art therapy (Hetherington, 2023). Sometimes referred to as somatic experiencing or somatic experiencing therapy, this approach includes mind-body integration. Instead of focusing solely on talking, mind-body techniques such as breathwork, dancing, grounding, and meditation (Resnick, 2023) are utilized by practitioners. In the popular book *Heal the Body Heal the Mind* (2018) author Babbel introduced the public to somatic therapies including "Somatic Experiencing (SE), Gestalt therapy, Hakomi, Focusing, Keleman, Integrative Body Psychotherapy (IBF), Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), Dance/movement therapy, Feldenkrais, Alexander Lowen technique" (p. 48). Babbel used these approaches to help readers address trauma they have experienced. Some of the techniques offered in the book included breathing, listening to music, and movement. In the book readers were told to "Move the body, move the energy. Even just wiggling your fingers or toes or moving your eyeballs

around can be helpful because it tells your body that it's not in survival mode" (Babbel, 2018, p. 45).

The techniques employed by somatic experience therapy can employ bottom-up processing. Bottom-up processing engages the senses to analyze incoming data. "This form of processing begins with sensory data and goes up to the brain's integration of this sensory information" (Cherry, 2023a). Awareness of surroundings is paramount and does not require previous experiences or knowledge. Counseling can often employ a top-down processing approach, which first focuses on prior experiences and knowledge as it applies to a situation or topic (Cherry, 2023b).

The March 2021 edition of *Counseling Today* included input from counselor Natae Feenstra, who runs and walks with her clients. On running with her clients, Feenstra stated "Natural bilateral stimulation – that's all that running is. Rhythmic movement of large muscle groups, and we know that can bring amazing benefits to our brain" (Bray, 2021, p. 24). The article further discussed the benefits of using running in sessions, including improvements in client mental health, and allowing for clients to connect more openly. Improvements in anxiety and depression have been noted, along with improvements in self-esteem. Some clients "are intimidated by eye contact or other aspects of face-to-face sessions or being in an office with a power differential. For some people, [running during counseling] can help them speak more freely," (Bray, 2021, p. 24).

School Counseling Foundations

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) requires all master's degree counseling programs, including school counseling, to have a minimum of 60 semester credit hours (CACREP, 2023). Training for school counselors

begins with a common core counseling curriculum, similar to the training for clinical mental health and master's level addictions counselors. In addition to the core counseling curriculum, school counseling students are required to complete specialized school counseling didactic courses and internships in K-12 schools. CACREP has 19 required school counseling-specific standards such as designing and evaluating school counseling curriculum, advocating for comprehensive school counseling programs, and identifying strategies to coordinate and implement interventions. Although school counselors may receive training on how to create and teach guidance lessons in their graduate coursework, they are not required in 49 out of 50 US states to have an undergraduate Teacher Education degree or teaching experience in order to be licensed/ credentialed as a school counselor (ASCA, 2024c). In addition, school counselors' overall training is substantially different from classroom teachers' training. For example, most school counseling students are not required to learn about education theories and research in their graduate training programs. Instead, their training is focused on the application of counseling theories and research, and the development of standards-based school counseling programs.

In 1997, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) published its first set of ASCA national standards. Later in 2003, ASCA released its first ASCA National Model which provided school counselors guidance on how to design, implement, and assess school counseling programs. The most recent fourth edition of this model was published in 2019. Moving from a guidance counseling model to a school counseling model has involved encompassing all facets of a student's life, not just post-secondary plans. The comprehensive model established the overall role and work of a school counselor and addressed the developmental needs of PK-12 students. According to the ASCA National Model (2019), school counselors should consider and address the academic, career, and social/emotional needs and developments of all students in

their school(s). To address student needs, school counselors work in a variety of settings, including classrooms, small groups, and individually. According to the model (ASCA, 2019), 80% of a school counselor's time should be spent directly providing services to students. Because the majority of time should be spent working with students, including small group and individual sessions, it is important to include this work in surveys about school counseling practices.

Movement in School Counseling

The research surrounding utilizing movement in classrooms (Beilock, 2015; Mahar et al., 2006; Mulrine et al., 2008; Stapp & Lamber, 2022) has the potential to be applied to classroom instruction by school counselors. There is a current lack of research specific to school counselors' use of movement in classroom lessons. Exploratory studies have been conducted to investigate school counselor specific needs and experiences in the classroom. Goodman-Scott (2019) researched classroom management for school counselors, even though classroom management resources and research existed for teachers. Themes such as school counselor characteristics and utilizing discipline emerged from the research. This research led to the creation of the School Counselor Classroom Management Inventory (Goodman-Scott & Boulden, 2022).

As stated previously, studies, articles, and books have been written regarding movement and counseling (Babbel, 2018; Bray, 2021; Brom et al., 2017; Hetherington, 2023; Jacobs & Schimmel, 2013; Resnick, 2023), however, there is a lack of research pertaining to small groups and individual sessions, specifically how to incorporate movement intentionally into both.. Solely because there is research on movement in educational settings does not mean that information will be transferred to individual and small group counseling sessions. In their article

about school counselor identity and the often-competing identities of educator and counselor, Levy & Lemberger-Truelove (2021) separate practices in instruction from practices in counseling. What is used in the classroom setting may not necessarily transfer to the counseling setting. When conducting individual and small group counseling, school counselors are trained to utilize the clinical skills and techniques referenced in the previous counseling section.

If school counselors desired to incorporate movement into their individual practice, there are limited resources available to provide guidance within the field of school counseling. There is one small group curriculum available through ASCA for school counselors which explicitly links physical movement with small group counseling. *Teaching Mindsets & Behaviors Through Physical Activity* (Hayden et al., 2019) is a small group curriculum (which could be used in a classroom) that helps children "develop life skills through physical activity" (p. 15). The curriculum was marketed for use in grades four through eight and physical activity is used as the mechanism to teach self-control, self-motivation, self-direction, respect, and how those skills can be applied in various areas of life. Games and physical activities are used in each session, such as running across the gym if the statement the school counselor reads is true for the student or completing exercises as they roll dice. There are specific activities prepared for each of the 12 lessons, and each includes notes on modifying for physical limitations and age of student.

School counseling specific applications are not more likely to be found in the research. The ASCA website has links to two school counselor association articles (Colorado and Indiana) that list ways for school counselors to integrate yoga and mindfulness into their practices along with rationale for doing so (Abel & Akande, 2022; Taylor, 2019). ASCA sponsored a publication for utilizing movement in delivering core curriculum. *Teaching Mindsets and Behaviors Through Physical Activity* (Hayden et al., 2019) included ideas for how to incorporate physical movement

into lessons for fourth through eighth grades. While a useful resource, school counselors still lack guidance on how to incorporate movement in their small-group and individual counseling sessions for all K-12 learners. Authors of this resource publication conducted research regarding school counselor beliefs and practices to utilize physical activity with students. Mainly, the researchers aimed to identify how (and if) school counselors collaborated and consulted with coaches along with school counselor beliefs regarding use of physical activity to work with students. In *Integrating Physical Activity, Coach Collaboration, and Life Skill Development in Youth: School Counselors' Perceptions* Hayden et al., 2014 focused their research on sport and physical activity to build relationships and teach skills.

As reasons and ways to incorporate movement are introduced, it is also important to consider potential barriers specific to schools and school counseling. School counselors are called to keep counseling (individual and small group) session information confidential. Section A.2 of the *ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (ASCA, 2022) outlined the school counselor's responsibility in keeping information confidential that is shared in sessions. School counselors take this standard seriously and may wonder if taking a walk or working with a student in the gym would break confidentiality, thus negating those ways of incorporating movement into sessions. Licensed Professional Counselor Natae Feenstra has discussed this concern with her clients before they run outside (Bray, 2021). She offered the option to stop talking, or take a break, if they come near other people during their session. As an ethical responsibility, this is an important consideration to discuss so school counselors can practice ethically.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had impacts on all aspects of life, although some schools and individuals were affected more than others. School closures, virtual learning, and increased spacing between individuals are just some of the impacts experienced starting in March 2020. According to an article in *Education Week* (2021), over 55 million students were affected by school closures. The article, mapping out school closures, indicated most states had closed schools temporarily by mid-March 2020, with almost all closed for the year by the end of April 2020 (Education Week, 2021). School counselors were left to determine how to deliver services to students and ensure school requirements and recommendations were met. Many schools moved to online learning which had school counselors delivering direct services virtually for the first time. Further, the ASCA *State of the Profession* report (2021) reported that over 80% of their survey respondents indicated their schools continued to be virtual or hybrid as the 2020-2021 academic year began. When facilitating small groups, school counselors encountered new considerations. If in person, they needed rooms with enough space to spread out (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021) and more materials may have been needed to keep everyone safe. Materials needed to be wiped down after use, leaving some school counselors without the means to use the materials they would have usually utilized. If providing services virtually, school counselors needed to consider how to facilitate a small group or individual session online. In its *State of the Profession* report, ASCA (2021) found 80% of its respondents wanted more training regarding virtual school counseling, and 67% of respondents were interested in more training on group counseling.

Savitz et al. (2021) shared changes in school counselor roles and resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some school counselors reported not having autonomy to adjust practices,

while others had too much and not enough guidance. Their findings included the fact that many school counselors had less individual and small group interaction with their students. Adjustments to practices included using Google Classroom and utilizing videoconferencing when allowed, although some school counselors stated their school district did not allow the use of videoconferencing services. These findings were general in nature, and do not provide information on how school counselors utilized, or did not utilize, movement in their sessions.

Further studies (Alexander et al., 2022; Roberts et al., 2023; Villares et al., 2022; Worth, 2022) addressed the changes in school counselor roles and struggles encountered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. School counselors found themselves needing to deliver continued mental health support to students and needed to adjust to the limited availability of students on virtual platforms and district policies that challenged privacy and confidentiality standards. Alexander et al. (2022) stated the need for further research related to school counseling, specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In their studies, Roberts et al. (2023) and Worth (2022) cited the need to identify virtual counseling practices and policies, due to the lack of training and resources.

Gaps in Literature

Various terms have been used regarding movement in this section. For clarity of this study, the movement that will be researched is movement. Merriam-Webster's online dictionary (Merriam-Webster, 2024) defined movement as "the act or process of moving *especially* : change of place or position or posture". Clarification between exercise and moderate-to-vigorous movement and movement is necessary. As noted above, exercise is helpful for mental health and has already been heavily researched. While a gap exists in what exercise, at what intensity level, and how long to "prescribe" exercise in counseling, that is not the focus of research for this

study. Physical movement has been incorporated into counseling already in the areas of dance and movement therapy, yoga-infused therapy, and somatic therapies. Many school counselors likely utilize movement in classroom lessons, based on the research and best practices that exist regarding movement in classrooms. Through all this research, movement has yet to be studied in school counselors' individual and small group sessions.

There is research regarding the benefits of movement on all ages. This research has expanded to the incorporation of movement in classrooms. However, there is currently no research applying movement to school counseling. There are limited resources for school counselors to access to incorporate movement into their practice, and even less when they want to incorporate movement in small group and individual counseling. There is one ASCA-sponsored resource available to school counselors with ideas on how to utilize physical activity in classroom lessons, but small group and individual counseling are not included specifically. Additionally, only grades 4-8 are identified as the audience for these activities, which leaves grades PreK-3 and 9-12 lacking in available activities. Since school counselors work with student clients in grades PreK-12, it is important to research all grades and not limit them to elementary and/or middle school. ASCA lists the role of the school counselor to "improve student success for ALL students" (American School Counselor Association, 2023a, para. 1). With a focus and directive to serve all students, it is imperative for school counselors to be equipped to work with all PreK-12 student-clients. Research on movement in education and the further development of somatic experience therapy demonstrates how beneficial movement can be, so the next step is to apply movement to the field of school counseling.

Summary

Chapter two aimed to review the current research available regarding movement and its place in school counseling. Although there is research on the benefits of movement and how to incorporate movement into educational settings and counseling, so far there is not an application of this knowledge and research to school counseling. Graduate programs standards do not require the teaching of how to incorporate movement into counseling sessions, whether individual or small group. This research is important, because school counselors are called to work with all students on their caseloads and must be prepared to work with PreK-12 students. It is important to apply the knowledge and practices currently available in the world of education and emerging practices in counseling to school counseling and provide the best services possible to students. The methodology of the study is shared in chapter three.

CHAPTER III

This exploratory mixed methods study used a concurrent embedded strategy to gather data through an online survey about school counselors' beliefs and practices regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions. All elements of research design and analysis are included in this chapter. Methodology is organized as follows: (1) research questions, (2) participants, (3) research design, (4) instrument development, (5) data collection, (6) data analysis, and (7) limitations of the study.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following four research questions:

1. What are school counselors' attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

2. What barriers do school counselors encounter that make it difficult to incorporate movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

3. What impact has COVID-19 had on school counselor use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

4. Have school counselors received training regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

Participants

Current school counselors were asked to complete an online survey regarding their beliefs and incorporation of movement in their counseling practice. Potential participants were asked to confirm that they meet the following two criteria: 1) are a practicing school counselor, and 2) are fully licensed/ credentialed/ certified as a school counselor in the United States or its territories, before completing the survey. Because participant recruitment data was shared

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through the ASCA Member Community and state school counselor associations, participants were likely all members of at least one of the school counselor associations.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited in two ways; by posting in the open forum of the ASCA Member Community (an online network of school counselors sponsored by the American School Counselor Association, formerly ASCA Scene) and by asking state school counselor associations to distribute the recruitment emails to their members. The ASCA Member Community allows school counselors to connect with other school counselors in the United States and around the world. Members of ASCA can post questions, recruitment flyers, and resources in the web based ASCA Member Community open forum. As of January 2024, there were 42,601 members of the Open Forum group within the ASCA Online Member Community (American School Counselor Association, 2024a). Being an active school counselor is not a requirement to be a member of the ASCA Member Community, so it is difficult to determine how many of the 42,601 members are currently practicing school counselors. There are 15 specific communities that members of the ASCA Member Community can join, but none of them are specific to research requests. The help page indicates that research requests may be made only to the open forum, or to solely one community such as elementary school counselors or high school counselors. To reach more school counselors, not only elementary, middle, or high school, recruitment messages were posted to the open forum. The post requesting participation in this study was available to all members in the open forum.

Contact was also made with state school counselor associations of all 50 states within the United States and the territory of Guam. The ASCA website listing of all state and territory school counselor associations that are ASCA affiliated (American School Counselor Association,

2024b) was used to find contacts for each state organization. State and territory organization leaders were contacted with a request to disburse the study information and survey to their members. One website link did not work from the ASCA listing, so an updated link was found from an internet search. Four websites did not have email addresses listed for their leadership, so their online contact form was utilized to make contact. The remaining associations were contacted by email. Some association websites provided information about listservs; these associations were contacted for permission to post recruitment emails to their listserv. Two state associations required membership to post recruitment calls, so membership was paid in order to recruit from South Carolina and Virginia. In total, 50 state and one US territory school counselor associations were contacted individually. A second email was sent to the individual school counselor associations that did not respond to the first email. In total, 17 state school counselor associations agreed to allow recruitment messages to their membership. No territory leadership responded to the requests.

There was much variance among state school counselor associations' communication of recruitment information. Recruitment information was shared in the following ways, depending on each association's procedures: sharing on listservs, posting to a special section on their website dedicated to research, sending out in weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly emails or newsletters, posting to social media platforms, and posting to members only portals. The timing of posts was difficult to control, because only one state association allowed direct posting to the listserv. Some associations allowed two messages to be sent, while others only allowed one call for participants.

Participation in the study was voluntary, and potential participants could choose to not start the survey or to discontinue participation at any time. This information was provided to

participants through the introduction posted on the ASCA Member Community and shared by state associations. There were no foreseen risks to participants through study participation, and that was also conveyed through the study introduction. To ensure the safety of participants and to meet university research standards, approval for the study was granted by the university IRB before beginning the survey distribution process.

Research Design

Since there is no published research on the topic of school counselors' use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions, the researcher decided to create an exploratory mixed methods study. Exploratory studies aim to explore the research questions, without offering "final and conclusive solutions to existing problems" (Dudovskiy, n.d., para. 1). These studies focus on developing a better understanding of the nature of the problem and exploring the research topic in further depth. In the field of school counseling exploratory studies are not uncommon, with topics ranging from online software (Sink, et al., 2019), including socioeconomically disadvantaged parents and parents of color in college readiness activities (Holcomb-McCoy, 2010), developing a classroom management inventory (Goodman-Scott & Boulden, 2022), and leadership practices of school counselors (Mason & McMahon, 2009).

A mixed methods study joins qualitative and quantitative methods together in one study. As Smith (2012) mentioned in his article about mixed methods research designs, these "research studies are the third wave or third research paradigm, suggesting that quantitative and qualitative designs can work together" (p. 2). There are six mixed methods research strategies; the current study utilized the concurrent embedded strategy. Smith further explained this strategy as follows: "one data set is embedded or considered nested within the study. There is a primary research method that guides the study and a secondary method that is supportive" (2012, p. 3). The

primary method (in this case, quantitative) drove the current study, and the second method (in

this case, qualitative) provided support (Creswell, 2009). The survey contained both quantitative

and qualitative questions and all questions were asked at the same time, not in waves. This is

characteristic of the concurrent embedded strategy (Creswell, 2009), as there is one phase of

collecting data. Figure 3 demonstrates how data was collected and analyzed.

Figure 3.1.

Concurrent Embedded Strategy (adopted from Figure 4.2(a) Creswell and Plano Clark (2007)
Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research)
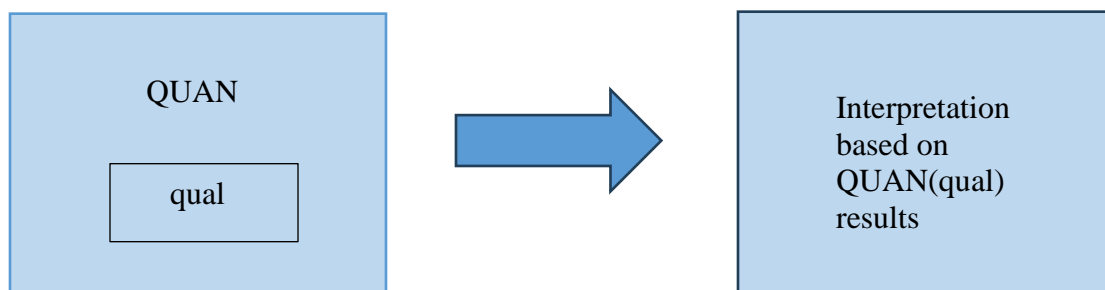
Creswell (2009) stated the concurrent embedded strategy allows researchers to

understand the data provided in a deeper way. By asking open-ended questions about what types

of movement school counselors implemented after COVID-19 and the reasons school counselors

incorporate movement, it was possible to identify themes that would otherwise go unnoticed.

This research design also allowed for further support and explanation of what was found in the

closed questions. As the open-ended question responses were analyzed, further understanding of

the barriers in movement incorporation was gained, as well as the reasons why school counselors

incorporated movement.

The survey was only available to participants online. Surveys have been, and still are,

printed and mailed to potential respondents, but online surveys have become more popular.

Offering surveys online cuts costs for both printing and mailing surveys, and can even produce

longer written responses (Tuten, 2010). When offering a survey online, it is important to consider internet access for participants (Tuten, 2010). Since the intended audience for this survey included practicing school counselors, it was extremely likely that all participants had internet access in their work settings.

Instrument Development

School counselor perception surveys and assessments exist (Goodman-Scott, 2015; Hayden et al., 2017; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005), but are linked to a specific standard or topic and many times have the goal to draw correlations and/or causation so were not appropriate for this study. Perception surveys on movement exist for professions outside of school counseling (Dellinger et al., 2008), but are focused on physical education or more extensive movement and do not address why school counselors do or do not incorporate movement into their practices. There was no published survey instrument that would be appropriate for use in this research study. Due to an instrument not being available, an original survey was created for this study. The researcher-created survey was used to gather data from participants. In collaboration with advisor Dr. Carol Buchholz Holland, a 31-question survey was created to gather information about school counselor attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding the use of movement in individual and small group sessions. Participants were asked about their training, consideration of student-client factors, and current practices regarding the use of movement in sessions. Questions regarding the use of movement and how it has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic were also included. It is believed that these questions added to the overall applicability of results by practitioners and counselor educators.

Three experienced school counselors (one each from the elementary, middle, and high school level) were asked for their feedback on the initial survey instrument. They were asked to

review the survey and demographic information requested, and provide feedback on the verbiage used, ease of understanding, and overall number of questions. Two of the school counselors were currently practicing in the Midwest, and one of the school counselors had recently retired from school counseling. Their feedback was used to revise the survey questions and demographic information requested of participants.

A second content expert review was conducted with additional reviewers from the Midwest prior to the survey being shared out with participants. The reviewers included an expert in the field of movement and physical activity, an experienced and retired counselor educator, three practicing school counselors, and a retired school counselor. Revisions were made to the survey instrument based on responses provided.

Response formats varied throughout the survey. Skip questions were utilized to streamline participant progress through the survey (Schonlau, 2002). The skip questions may have kept participants more engaged and helped some participants move through the survey more easily. Four of the survey questions requested a short response, asking for participants to respond with what they have tried because of the COVID-19 pandemic, why they incorporate movement into small group and individual sessions, why they do not include movement in sessions, and what else they would like the researchers to know about movement and school counseling.

The survey contained 24 questions of varying formats, and an additional seven demographic questions. Participants are asked about their work settings, age, race, and gender. The demographic questions were not included to draw correlations between demographic information and responses noted; the information was helpful for readers of this study and me to know the makeup of the current survey respondents. Question formats included: yes/no, rating

scale, multiple selection, and short response. By varying the question formats, we (survey creators) believed participants would find the questions not to be redundant and keep the participants' attention. Questions were grouped according to question type and content (Callegaro et al., 2015), with questions grouped according to question subject. For example, usefulness and level of knowledge were grouped together, and individual and small group counseling questions were separated. This format was utilized throughout the survey.

It is beneficial to ask open ended questions when all choices are not predictable (Callegaro et al., 2015). As an exploratory study, there was not a research base of school counselor perceptions to review and list in a checkbox. By asking participants to respond with why they incorporate movement, it is hoped that no reasons were missed, and a deeper understanding of this topic will be gained. The same applies to the one additional open-ended question regarding additional types of movement used since the COVID-19 pandemic. It was not possible to list all methods of incorporating movement, and this additional question revealed intricacies of the pandemic and indicated what (if any) types of movement were incorporated because of it. Considerations of text box size were considered, as larger text boxes can indicate a longer response is needed and potentially lower the response rate (Callegaro et al., 2015). The survey creators incorporated four open ended questions to gather more detailed information, and not overburden respondents with multiple text boxes.

To aid in response rate and survey completion, respondents were given the option to choose "none" or "I did not consider" for all responses. Giving these options encouraged respondents to indicate a reply, and not leave it up to question if respondents did not see their answer in the rating or multiple selection box (Callegaro et al., 2015). Respondents were required to respond to all closed and open-ended questions before submitting the survey. At the

beginning of the survey, participants were given information about the voluntary nature of the survey and that they could discontinue participation at any time. Hard prompts (not allowing participants to proceed without completion) can increase the response rate and can increase the seriousness of participants (Callegaro et al., 2015). Response options including "N/A", "prefer not to respond", and "I do not incorporate movement", aid with the ethical delivery of surveys with forced responses (Sue & Ritter, 2012) so they were included in the survey instrument.

Along with the content-specific survey questions, participants were asked to respond to seven demographic questions. The questions prompted participants to indicate grade levels with which they work, years of employment, state of employment, gender identity and race/ethnicity, school setting, along with education level. Even though this information was not linked to causation or correlation of survey responses, it was important to know the demographics of survey participants which is shared in chapter four. Per Sue and Ritter's (2012) recommendations, the demographic questions were listed at the end of the survey instrument. If participants found the demographic questions unnecessary or unrelated to the research topic, they may have chosen to not complete the survey. Along with the relatedness of questions to the research topic, having too many demographic questions would add to the overall time participants needed to devote to the survey (Sue & Ritter, 2012).

Validity of the Instrument

By incorporating two content reviews, face validity was assessed. As Holden (2010) defines it, "face validity is defined as the degree to which test respondents view the content of a test and its items as relevant to the context in which the test is being administered" (p. 637). It was important in this study for research participants to view the questions as pertinent. Since

responding to the survey and completing it was voluntary, survey participants needed to find it worthwhile.

As part of the survey instrument creation, reliability was not tested. There was a concern on the part of the survey developers that by simply completing the survey instrument, participant knowledge and responses would be impacted. Examples of movement were provided in the survey, and as one study participant stated "Upon thinking about it, I use movement in every individual, group, and classroom setting". Yet another participant stated "I didn't think I used movement in sessions until I realized I sometimes play games with students, go for a walk and talk, go out and play catch and those count as movement. I was only thinking of yoga or exercise, etc". There is the possibility that the same respondent would have markedly different answers the second time they completed the survey based on what they learned from completing the survey the first time. Reliability was not tested on this instrument and cannot be reported.

Data Collection

As listed previously, two avenues were used to notify and recruit potential participants of the study. One avenue was posting to the ASCA online Member Community, and the other avenue was recruitment messages shared by individual state school counselor associations.

The ASCA site has a member directory in which members can choose to list their email addresses, but the site explicitly states that emails cannot be used to send out research invitations. This researcher contacted the member services manager of ASCA, and it was confirmed that this has been the policy since at least 2018. The ASCA Member Community provides an opportunity to share research requests with all members of the national school counselor association, albeit in a post rather than individual emails. An initial post, with study information and a link to the survey, was made to the ASCA Member Community open forum. Two weeks later a second

request was posted to the networking site. A third reminder was sent two weeks after the second request. A final reminder and thank you was posted six weeks after the initial post and indicated the survey would be open for one additional week.

As listed in previous sections, the processes and procedures of each state association were different. It was hoped that an initial email with recruitment information would be sent out on day one (to match the post date on the ASCA Member Community) and then a thank you and final call email sent two weeks later. Callegaro, et al. (2015) researched email surveys and noted that participation does not typically increase substantially after the second call for participation, and several email requests for participation can turn off potential respondents.

Because of the varying procedures of each association, it was not possible to follow the same collection plan for each state. Table 3 shows how each state distributed recruitment information.

Table 3.1.

State school counselor association methods of sharing study recruitment information

Method	Frequency	Number of associations
Email	1 time	1
Listserv	1 time	1
Listserv	2 times	4
Member engagement system	1 time	1
Member engagement system	2 times	2
Monthly newsletter	1 time	1
Monthly newsletter	2 times	2
Research specific email	1 time	1
Social media	1 time	1
Social media & newsletter	2 times	1
Website	1 time	2

Note: N=17

Qualtrics was used to house the survey and collect participant responses. The survey was open for eight weeks and all responses were kept securely in Qualtrics. Survey results and responses were stored on a password-protected flash drive. Individual survey responses were only shared with advisor Dr. Carol Buchholz Holland.

Protection of Participants

Names and email addresses were not collected as part of the survey completion, so no personally identifying information was available to anyone on the research team. The manner of collection of participant demographic information made it impossible to personally identify any individual participant, since responses were requested from all regions of the United States. Confidentiality is an important consideration for the researcher and especially the respondents. Through heightened awareness of internet practices, potential participants may have questioned if the survey and their information was secure (Dillman et al., 2009). Respondents, through the introduction information, learned that their personal information reported in the demographic section was not linked to their survey responses. Their names and email addresses were not collected through the survey instrumentation, so no members of the research team had access to that identifying information.

Although it is not believed that respondents were harmed by participating in the study, it is important to gain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to beginning the study. Approval for the study was requested from the university institutional review board prior to sending out requests for participation. As listed on their website, the NDSU IRB is devoted to protecting participants.

These protections ensure that: risks to participants are minimized, risks are reasonable in relation to benefits, recruitment procedures are fair, subjects are sufficiently informed and

able to make a voluntary choice, their privacy and confidentiality are respected, and extra

protections are in place for vulnerable groups (North Dakota State University, 2023)

Information regarding IRB approval was included in the request to state school counselor

associations and the posts to the ASCA Member Community.

As listed previously, participation in the study was voluntary; no participants were

required to complete the survey. At the beginning of the survey, participants were notified that

participation was voluntary and they could discontinue survey completion at any time.

Participants were able to exit the survey at any time.

Data Analysis

Once responses were submitted, data was analyzed. Because this is an exploratory study,

correlation and causation is not available based upon survey results. Means and percentages were

calculated for closed-response questions and themes were identified from open-ended questions.

Demographic question responses were reported in percentages. There was no correlation or

causation determined through the responses; the demographic information obtained

demonstrated the populations that responded to the survey and informed survey limitations and

implications for further research. Findings of the data analysis are listed in the next chapter.

Structural coding was used for the first cycle coding. Structural coding is appropriate for

"standardized or semi-structured data-gathering protocol …" and "to gather topic lists or indexes

of major categories or themes" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 98). The purpose of this study was to

determine what types of movement school counselors are incorporating and why they are doing

so. By utilizing structural coding, frequency of themes and responses was noted and can

potentially inform future practice. Pattern coding was used for the second cycle coding. As

Saldaña (2016) states, by utilizing pattern coding, information will be grouped into a fewer

number of categories and further themes will be identified. This same method was utilized to identify themes of closed-response that listed "other" as an option and offered a chance for respondents to specify.

Trustworthiness is important to address when studies involve qualitative data. As Stahl and King (2020) write "qualitative researchers strive for the less explicit goal of trustworthiness, which means that when readers interpret the written work, they will have a sense of confidence in what the researcher has reported" (p. 26). In this study, credibility and trustworthiness were established by having the researcher and the research advisor (and listed IRB principal investigator) both review qualitative data independently to determine emerging themes. When coding was complete, they came together to compare and analyze their findings. Findings of the data analysis are listed in the next chapter.

Limitations of the Study

Although steps were taken to secure as many school counseling participants as possible, there are groups of school counselors that may not have been able to participate. Because participation and recruitment posts were made to school counselor associations, those who were not members of their state and/or national school counselor associations were not invited to participate. Therefore, not all practicing school counselors in the United States and its territories received the recruitment messages.

Survey responses were anonymous and demographic questions were not linked to individual question responses. It was not possible to hypothesize or draw connections between demographic information and overall responses to the survey questions. For example, it was not possible to identify practices and/or beliefs of school counselors working at the high school level or school counselors in a certain area of the United States.

It is possible that this study was not of interest to all practicing school counselors who received the recruitment messages. The results of the study may be skewed to reflect attitudes and beliefs of school counselors who are interested in the research topic and have incorporated movement frequently or pursued further education in the area.

A final limitation is the survey itself. The survey was created for the present study and survey tool psychometrics were not established. Future research studies may wish to utilize an instrument that has been tested more rigorously.

Summary

The mixed methods exploratory study utilized a concurrent embedded strategy in order to learn more about school counselor incorporation of movement into small group and individual sessions. To answer the research questions, an online survey was created. The survey consisted of a total of 31 questions, including seven demographic questions. Of the 24 content specific questions, 21 were closed-response and four were open-ended. One of the open-ended questions was a follow-up to a yes/no question. The closed-response questions allowed participants to respond in a variety of ways, including checkboxes, yes/no, and rating scale. Two groups of professionals were asked to participate in pilot studies to enhance the survey questions and overall flow. Face validity was determined based on these two pilot studies.

Approval for the study was obtained from the North Dakota State University IRB prior to collecting responses on the survey. The survey was distributed via Qualtrics and took approximately 10 minutes to complete. The online survey information was sent out by state school counselor associations and posted to the ASCA Online Member Community. The results of the survey are included in chapter four.

CHAPTER IV

This chapter focuses on reporting the findings of the survey completed by participants. Demographic information provided by survey participants is listed first, followed by response results as they apply to the four research questions. Implications and further analysis of the findings will be discussed in the following chapter.

Participants

In total, 180 participants started the survey. One hundred fifty-three participants completed the survey in its entirety, including demographic information, which is a completion rate of 85.00%. Of the 180 initiated surveys, Qualtrics determined that eight could have been completed by bots. All responses are included in this chapter.

At the end of the survey instrument, participants were asked to share demographic information. Demographic information is not linked to specific responses and is shared to give an overall view of participants. Participants indicated the grades they work with at their school(s), years of experience, state in which they are currently working, current work setting, highest degree earned, gender identity and race/ethnicity.

Table 4.1 shows the breakdown of grades participants worked with at their school site(s), years of school counseling experience, campus setting, and highest degree earned. To note, participants could check all grades that applied to their student clientele, so the total number of responses for that question equals more than the total number of participants. Representation of school counselors working at all levels is present in participants of the current study. Study participants mainly worked with grades 9-12, followed by PreK-5, and then grades 6-8. Participants also indicated their years of school counseling experience. Study participants had a range of years of experience, with all categories having representation in the study. The largest

groups of participants had fewer than five years of experience and 20 or more years' experience.

Over half of the participants (54.90%) had 11 or more years of school counseling experience. As

part of the demographic information provided, participants disclosed their current school setting.

Although the survey asked participants about their work during COVID-19, this specific

demographic question asked about the current setting. Most participants (98.69%) reported a

work setting of face-to-face or on-campus. Participants were also asked to share their education

level. Most participants (85.62%) had a master's degree. All participants had training above a

bachelor's level.

Table 4.1.

Study participant work and education demographic information

		n	%
Grade			
	PreK	27	17.64
	K	61	39.86
	1	63	41.17
	2	65	42.48
	3	66	43.13
	4	68	44.44
	5	66	43.13
	6	55	35.94
	7	59	38.56
	8	60	39.21
	9	77	50.32
	10	79	51.63
	11	79	51.63
	12	78	50.98
	Prefer not to respond	0	0
Years of experience			
	0-5	42	27.45
	6-10	26	16.99

Table 4.1.

Study participant work and education demographic information (Continued)

		n	%
Years of experience	11-15	23	15.03
	16-20	24	15.69
	20+	37	24.18
	Prefer not to respond	1	0.65
Current work setting			
	On-campus / face-to-face	151	98.69
	Online	0	0
	Hybrid (on-campus and online)	2	1.31
	Prefer not to respond	0	0
Highest degree earned			
	Doctorate	8	5.23
	Specialist	14	9.15
	Master's	131	85.62
	Bachelor's	0	0
	Prefer not to respond	0	0

Note: N = 153

Study participants were also asked to list the state in which they work. Twenty-six states were represented. No participants indicated they worked in a US territory. Table 4.2 shows the states in which study participants work. States with no study participants are not listed. Participants were mainly from the Midwest region of the United States, although the state of New York had the most respondents (*n*=46, 30.07%). Representation from 26 states was included in the overall participant demographics, with all regions having representation.

Table 4.2.

State in which study participants work

State	n	%	State	n	%
Alaska	2	1.31	Nebraska	1	0.65
Arizona	1	0.65	New Jersey	1	0.65
Arkansas	12	7.84	New Mexico	1	0.65
California	1	0.65	New York	46	30.07
Florida	1	0.65	North Carolina	1	0.65
Illinois	2	1.31	North Dakota	27	17.65
Indiana	1	0.65	Ohio	26	16.99
Kentucky	9	5.88	Pennsylvania	1	0.65
Maryland	1	0.65	South Carolina	1	0.65
Massachusetts	1	0.65	Texas	1	0.65
Minnesota	1	0.65	Vermont	1	0.65
Missouri	1	0.65	Virginia	8	5.23
Montana	4	2.61	Washington	1	0.65

Note: N = 153

Regarding gender identity, 88.24% of participants listed their gender identity as female, with 11.11% indicating male. Lastly, participants identified their race/ethnicity. The majority (86.27%) of participants identified as White or Caucasian. Participants were able to indicate their race or ethnicity if it was not listed in the options above. Three participants responded that their race/ethnicity was not listed and specified that they identified as Afro Caribbean ($n=1$), Haitian ($n=1$), and American ($n=1$). Table 4.3 lists the breakdown of gender identity and race/ethnicity of study participants.

Table 4.3.

Gender identity and race/ethnicity of study participants

		n	%
Gender identity			
	Female	135	88.24
	Male	17	11.11
	Non-binary / Gender fluid	0	0
	Prefer not to respond	1	0.65
Race/ethnicity			
	Asian	1	0.65
	Bi-racial or Multi-racial	2	1.31
	Black or African American	8	5.23
	Hispanic or Latinx	6	3.92
	White or Caucasian	132	86.27
	Not listed above	3	1.96
	Prefer not to respond	1	0.65

Note: N = 153

Data Analysis

A mixed methods study includes both quantitative and qualitative data. The concurrent embedded strategy gathers both quantitative and qualitative data in the same round of data collection. As part of the survey instrument, both open-ended and closed-response questions were asked. Options of "I do not use", "I do not consider", and "I prefer not to respond" were offered, since all questions had forced responses. Each of the survey questions were linked to the original four research questions. Results of the survey will be shared below, within the context of each research question.

Research question 1: What are school counselors' attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

Participants were asked to indicate their perceived level of knowledge about how to incorporate movement into individual counseling sessions and small group sessions. To respond to these questions, participants chose from a scale, ranging from 1= *no knowledge* to 5 = *extremely knowledgeable*. Table 4.8 shows the breakdown of responses for both individual and small group responses.

Table 4.4.

Perceived level of knowledge of how to incorporate movement into individual and small group counseling sessions

Knowledge level	Individual	%	Group	%
	n		*n*	
No knowledge (1)	3	1.81	12	7.27
Slightly knowledgeable (2)	22	13.25	23	13.94
Moderately knowledgeable (3)	54	32.53	50	30.30
Very knowledgeable (4)	68	40.96	61	36.97
Extremely knowledgeable (5)	19	11.45	19	11.52

Note: N = 166 for individual, N = 165 for group

Of interest was whether the participants' perceived knowledge would differ between individual and small group incorporation. Most respondents (52.41%) indicated they perceived themselves as very knowledgeable or extremely knowledgeable regarding incorporating movement into individual counseling sessions. A little less than half of respondents (48.49%) rated themselves very knowledgeable or extremely knowledgeable in incorporating movement into group counseling sessions. Overall, respondents rated themselves higher in knowledge of incorporating movement into individual counseling. The mean for responses for perceived knowledge for individual sessions was 3.47, and the mean for small group sessions was 3.32, indicating that on average participants rated themselves moderately knowledgeable in the area of incorporating movement into individual and small group counseling sessions.

Along with perceived knowledge, survey participants were asked how useful they believe movement is in individual sessions and in small group counseling sessions. Potential responses were again on a rating scale, this time ranging from 1 = *not useful at all* to 5 = *very useful*.

Table 4.5.

Perceived usefulness of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions

Usefulness	Individual	%	Group	%
	n		*n*	
Not useful at all (1)	1	0.60	3	1.82
Slightly useful (2)	7	4.22	11	6.67
Moderately useful (3)	33	19.88	38	23.03
Very useful (4)	77	46.39	61	36.97
Extremely useful (5)	48	28.92	52	31.52

Note: N = 166 for individual, N = 165 for group

The perceived usefulness of movement was slightly higher in individual sessions versus group sessions. The mean for usefulness individual sessions was 3.99, and the mean for usefulness in group sessions was 3.90, indicating that on average participants found incorporating movement to be very useful in individual sessions and moderately to very useful in small groups. Over 75% of respondents indicated movement was very useful or extremely useful in individual sessions, while 68.49% of respondents listed movement in small groups was very or extremely useful.

Participants were asked if they conducted individual counseling sessions at their school(s), along with if they conducted small group counseling sessions at their school(s). Table 4.6 shows that 95.78% of the respondents indicated that they conduct individual counseling sessions at their school site(s). In addition, 71.52% of the respondents reported conducting group counseling sessions at their school site(s).

Table 4.6.

Study participant facilitation of individual and group counseling sessions

Conduct sessions	Individual	%	Group	%
	n		*n*	
Yes	159	95.78	118	71.52
No	7	4.22	47	28.48

Note: N = 166 for individual, N = 165 for group

Participants had the opportunity to note how often they incorporated movement into individual counseling sessions and small group sessions. The frequency was inclusive of past and present practices. Respondents rated their frequency from 1= *never in sessions* to 5 = *all sessions*. If participants indicated they did not conduct individual and/or group counseling sessions, then they were not asked to answer the following questions. Response breakdowns are listed in Table 4.7. If respondents responded "no" to either of the questions above, they skipped the questions regarding individual and/or group counseling.

Table 4.7.

Frequency of movement incorporation into individual and small group counseling sessions

Frequency	Individual	%	Group	%
	n		*n*	
Never in sessions (1)	10	6.29	3	2.54
Some sessions (2)	41	25.79	28	23.73
About half of sessions (3)	37	23.27	22	18.64
Most sessions (4)	54	33.96	51	43.22
All sessions (5)	17	10.69	14	11.86

Note: N = 159 for individual, N = 118 for group

Although most respondents indicated they were very or extremely knowledgeable on incorporating movement in individual sessions and that movement was very or extremely useful in individual sessions, less than half (44.65%) reported using movement in most or all sessions. That was not the case for frequency of incorporating movement into group counseling sessions.

For school counselors that conduct group sessions, 55.08% report using movement in most or all sessions. The mean of responses for frequency in individual sessions was 3.17 and for group sessions was 3.38, indicating that on average participants incorporate movement into about half of their sessions (individual and group).

To understand how school counselors are incorporating movement into their sessions, they were asked to select what type(s) of movement they utilized. Responses included what had been incorporated at the time of the survey or any time prior. To note, two respondents did not complete this question regarding group counseling sessions, so the number of group respondents is lower than the previous question.

Table 4.8.

Type of movement used in individual and small group counseling sessions

Type of movement	Individual *n*	%	Group *n*	%
Yoga	27	16.98	25	21.55
Writing on whiteboard (small or large) or Smartboard	80	50.31	81	69.83
Games (board games, card games, etc.)	117	73.58	101	87.07
Activity that requires student(s) to move from place to place	59	37.11	77	66.38
Using "fidgets" or other manipulatives	137	86.16	74	63.79
Using props and toys	81	50.94	56	48.28
Having student(s) switch chairs/spots	41	25.79	55	47.41
Going for a walk	125	78.62	38	32.76
Coloring, painting, drawing	122	76.73	89	76.72
Seating that allows for movement (ex: exercise ball, wobble chair, etc.)	51	32.08	36	31.03
Making a craft	62	38.99	71	61.21
Movement with videos (ex: GoNoodle)	27	16.98	31	26.72
Role playing, acting	65	40.88	77	66.38
Using sand, playdough, or clay	88	55.35	40	34.48
Tossing a ball	80	50.31	60	51.72
Other	16	10.06	9	7.76
I do not incorporate movement into individual/group counseling	5	3.14	4	3.45

Note: N = 159 for individual, N = 116 for group

As reflected in the results above, there was no single way to incorporate movement that most respondents utilized in individual counseling sessions. The options that were chosen the most frequently included using "fidgets" or other manipulatives (86.16%, n=137), going for a walk (78.62%, n=125), coloring, painting, or drawing (76.73%, n=122), and games (73.58%, n=117). Surprisingly, there were no options listed for incorporating movement in individual sessions that received zero responses.

Sixteen respondents (10.06%) indicated "other" for the ways to incorporate movement into individual counseling sessions. They were asked to indicate how they have incorporated movement and consisted of activities/games (n=8), exercise (n=5), seating (n=2), and props/materials (n=2). Some examples of the activities or games listed include puzzles, Legos, and journaling. Exercise included specific physical activities like jumping jacks, pushups, punching bag, kicking soccer balls, and chair exercises. A seating example included swings and specific types of chairs. Examples of using props and materials include using puppets, using a "scream" cup, and providing bubble wrap to be popped.

Like the results for individual counseling, there were no ways that most respondents indicated incorporating movement into group counseling. Games (87.07%, n=101), coloring, painting, or drawing (76.72%, n=89), and writing on a whiteboard or smartboard (69.83%, n=81) were the options chosen with the highest number of responses. Nine respondents (7.76%) indicated "other" for the incorporation of movement in groups and were asked to specify how they did so. Responses consisted of games and activities (n=6), movement with music (n=2), breath work (n=2), and chair exercises (n=1). Games and activities included outdoor and partner games, challenge activities, and Legos.

To learn more about their decision-making process, participants were asked what factors they considered when making the decision to incorporate movement into individual sessions. Participants were encouraged to check all factors that applied. Responses for both individual and group sessions are listed in Table 4.9. To note, one respondent did not answer the group counseling session question on the survey, so the total number of group respondents is lower than the previous question.

Table 4.9.

Factors considered when deciding to incorporate movement in individual and group counseling sessions

Factor considered	Individual	%	Group	%
	n		*n*	
Student(s) age	106	66.67	79	68.70
Student(s) gender identity	10	6.29	11	9.57
Presenting concern / Topic	126	79.25	92	80.00
Student(s) learning /developmental level	90	56.60	73	63.48
Student(s) physical abilities	96	60.38	77	66.96
Size of office / counseling space	97	61.01	97	84.35
Relationship with the student(s) / how well you know the student(s)	105	66.04	61	53.04
Other	25	15.72	12	10.43
I do not consider any factors	5	3.14	1	0.87
I do not incorporate movement	6	3.77	3	2.61

Note: N = 159 for individual, N = 115 for group

As with the previous question findings, there was no factor that most participants indicated considering when incorporating movement into individual and group counseling sessions. The most reported factors that school counselors consider for individual counseling sessions included the presenting concern/student topic (79.25%, *n*=126), the student age (66.67%, *n*=106), and the relationship with the student (66.04%, *n*=105). Eleven respondents

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(6.91%) indicated they do not consider any factors or do not incorporate movement into individual sessions.

Participants were able to mark "other" and then specify what factors were considered. Twenty-five participants (15.72%) chose this response for factors impacting the choice to incorporate movement in individual sessions. Responses were grouped into themes of *specific student characteristics* (n=11), *student choice* (n=8), *student regulation* (n=6), *counselor skill* (n=2), and *environment* (n=1). Examples of *specific student characteristics* include the student's need to move, student ability and learning style. Some participants indicated they offer students a choice of incorporating movement or see if the student requests it. Others mentioned considering student emotional and mental states when deciding whether to incorporate movement into individual counseling sessions. The two respondents who listed *counselor skill* as a factor included incorporating movement naturally as a school counselor into individual sessions and discerning what students need in the moment regarding movement.

The most recorded responses for factors that participants consider when deciding to incorporate movement into group counseling included size of the office or counseling space (84.35%, n=97), presenting concern or group topic (80.00%, n=92) and group member ages (68.70%, n=79). The size of the counseling space seems a logical consideration, since school counselors lists small office spaces as a concern and potential barrier (see research question 2). Twelve participants (10.43%) specified another factor they considered when deciding whether to incorporate movement into group sessions. Responses included student appropriateness (n=6), group appropriateness (n=4), and time (n=2). Student appropriateness included examples such as student behavior, student requests for movement, physical disabilities, and attention span. Group appropriateness included examples of relationships of group members and the topic.

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Qualitative data was also gathered from participants by asking open-ended questions. One open-ended question asked participants the reasons they incorporate movement in individual and group counseling sessions. This question was not separated into individual and small groups, as previous questions had been. Participants were able to write freely about their reasons for incorporating movement. One hundred forty-two of the survey participants included a response to this question. There were five themes that emerged when reviewing the responses. The five themes were *increase student skills and functioning* (*n*=111), *increase engagement and attention* (*n*=62), *increase comfort* (*n*=55), *need for movement* (*n*=32), and *increase enjoyment* (*n*=14).

Within the theme of *increasing student skills and functioning*, respondents addressed how movement can help with regulation, addressing anxiety and ADHD, can be used to directly teach skills, and can help students learn. Respondents noted that movement can address specific needs of students: "A lot of the students I work with have ADHD symptoms and need movement breaks", "Movement is a helpful way to relieve anxiety", and "I incorporate movement in both individual and group counseling sessions because the student population that I work with (special education students with behavioral management needs) typically thrive when they are given more movement breaks and tasks". Similar to addressing student needs, participants stated that movement can help teach students skills. Movements such as role-playing allowed students to practice skills they learned in individual and group counseling sessions. There was also mention of using movement to teach social emotional skills and coping skills along with "help students to improve and enhance self-awareness". Respondents also shared that movement could help students learn better and retain the information from the session(s). One participant stated "I incorporate movement because I believe experiential learning is more impactful/beneficial". Survey responses also discussed participant knowledge of the mind-body connection, benefits to

brain function, and body reactions to movement. Some responses included the ideas of movement helping students to process better and using movement as a "natural healing tool".

The theme of *increase engagement and attention* addressed the ability to use movement to keep students engaged in sessions and sustained focus on the session. Many respondents indicated that they incorporate movement to keep students of all ages engaged and focused on individual and group counseling sessions. Participants shared "I believe that various movements provide a mindful environment where students can find a level of focus and remain present throughout the task/activity" and "It engages students, so they are able to focus better and remember what they are learning". By incorporating movement, counselors can keep the interest of the student because, as one participant mentioned "We can get bored doing the same thing in the same space".

The theme of *increase comfort* arose from respondents' commenting on putting students at ease, that it can increase communication from the student, it can help build connections, and that movement can serve as a distraction from the difficult issues and topics. One participant said movement can "destigmatize 'counseling/therapy' as a talk based experience". Responses such as "[movement] Allows for students to be more comfortable to speak and share", "Some students are more comfortable talking when they are not solely focused on the talking", and that movement can "put student(s) at ease for the session, [and] help with communication of presenting concern" communicate the belief that students can speak and share more when movement is incorporated. In addition, movement can assist in processing difficult topics. Respondents stated "Movement encourages feelings of comfort. When hands are busy, it's often easier to talk about different things" and "In working with high schoolers . . . it can reduce discomfort about discussing their emotions and feelings". Regarding building connections, some

respondents believe incorporating movement can assist in building a connection between the school counselor and client and even amongst group members. One participant stated "they [students] need to be able to make a connection with the counselor that is not just me asking a bunch of questions". Regarding group counseling, one participant commented that "in group activities [movement] can help form the basic trust that is needed to go into deeper issues".

The theme of *need for movement* addressed respondents' beliefs that children and adolescents need to move throughout the day and addressed the amount of seated time there is during the school day. Respondents noted "Students get fidgety when [they] sit too long", "I believe it is very important for students to move their bodies. They sit so much during the day and this can increase issues with self-regulation", and "Students 'get and sit' all day. Sometimes they need a break from sitting. I know I do!" Interestingly, one respondent noted that movement is beneficial for the school counselor, and that "On occasion it [movement] can be for my sake. My need to move throughout the day, and the student is willing to go for a walk with me".

The researcher was somewhat surprised by the theme of *increase enjoyment*. Participants indicated that including movement makes sessions more fun and adds variety. Comments within this theme included "I know movement can be enjoyable and the more enjoyable an activity the more likely students will retain the information being presented", "To make sessions more fun and memorable", and "Kids need to move! It's fun, gives everyone a chance to shine". School counselors reported that movement is enjoyable for both students and them; "I have found that with more movement (and creativity and flexibility) my individual counseling sessions are more fun for both myself and the student". Respondents also stated that movement can be enjoyable by helping students to be creative and allowing an outlet to be themselves.

As a follow-up to this research question, participants were asked why they do not incorporate movement in individual and group counseling sessions. Eighty-seven participants responded to the question. Three themes emerged when reviewing survey responses. The three themes included *environmental fit* (*n*=62), *student fit* (*n*=57), and *counselor fit* (*n*=23).

Within *environmental fit*, responses included lack of materials and/or funding for materials, lack of space, lack of privacy and confidentiality, concern for teacher and/or admin perception, safety concerns, lack of time, and outside of job scope. Participant responses regarding space included "My office is tiny. If we are meeting there, there simply isn't room" and "Lack of space, small office". To address the issue of space, one counselor stated "I have a small office and sometimes space is limited to do bigger movement activities. I have brought students outside when it is nice out to do some of the games".

Within the theme of *student fit*, responses included student behaviors, inappropriateness for specific students and/or situations, disinterest of students, concern of student perceptions, and age appropriateness. One respondent stated "With individual counseling, I find movement is not always appropriate depending on the emotional state of the student and/or the topic" and another wrote "The only reason that I would not is the situation that might not require a walk or if the student is to[o] upset/emotional". The theme of student fit emphasized the professional discretion used by practicing counselors to determine if movement is appropriate. Some respondents also indicated that they are concerned about student perception and comfort, displayed by "Some students are not comfortable with the movement. They may feel we are not as focused on what is being said if there is too much movement".

Finally, within the theme of *counselor fit*, respondents commented on lack of confidence and/or knowledge to incorporate movement, and lack of awareness and/or planning. A

respondent stated that "I'm sometimes not prepared for a movement activity with my client" and another respondent stated "I don't have time to dedicate to it". Respondents also cited their lack of training or knowledge on how to apply movement to the sessions. Comments included "Lack of training on more intensive/structured movement practices" and "It can be hard to adapt some group curriculums to include movement".

The last question to address the research question asked participants to write about what they would like us (the research team) to know about the integration or movement within school counseling practice. Although it was a forced completion question, participants had the option to mark N/A if they had nothing additional to note. Fifty-three survey participants responded to the question. As the results were reviewed, five themes emerged: *benefits/importance of movement* (n=24), *information request* (n=19), *age factor* (n=5), *insight and reflection* (n=6), and *barriers* (n=3).

The largest theme that emerged was that of *benefits and importance*. Many responses included reasons why movement is helpful and beneficial. Respondents indicated that movement is "essential to student learning and engagement", it is "integral as practice" as a school counselor, and that they "firmly believe in using movement in counseling". Participants included that movement is beneficial for student engagement and can help with skills transfer.

The theme of *information request* came from comments that participants would like to learn more, have more information on the ideas and research on the topic, and have ideas on how to incorporate movement. Two responses included requests for how to share information with teachers and administration. The *age factor* theme came from responses on student age and appropriateness for movement. One response stated that they do not use movement in individual

counseling in high schools, while two respondents indicated movement is helpful for all ages, including "even older teens".

The theme of *insight and reflection* emerged from comments about the pandemic and resuming activities, along with reflection that more movement has been incorporated into one participant's individual practice in the last years. New insight was also shared, with one participant reporting they "didn't know this was a strategy". Finally, the theme of *barriers* arose in responses about lack of funds to purchase more objects, lack of admin support, and lack of interest in the topic.

Research question 2: What barriers do school counselors encounter that make it difficult to incorporate movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

Participants were asked to identify barriers from a list provided that prevented them from incorporating movement into individual and small group counseling sessions. Participants were able to check all that applied. Table 4.14 lists the responses to the questions for both individual and small groups.

Table 4.10.

Barriers that prevent, or have prevented, participants from incorporating movement into individual and small group counseling sessions

Barrier	Individual	%	Group	%
	n		*n*	
Lack of space	83	52.20	70	60.87
Lack of training	30	18.87	19	16.52
Lack of ideas	37	23.27	30	26.09
Lack of confidence	21	13.21	18	15.65
Lack of knowledge of how to navigate confidentiality if not in an office / classroom	17	10.69	8	6.96
Lack of funds to purchase items to use	49	30.82	38	33.04
Lack of items to use	34	21.38	31	26.96
Lack of time to incorporate into session	59	37.11	46	40.00

Table 4.10.

Barriers that prevent, or have prevented, participants from incorporating movement into individual and small group counseling sessions (Continued)

Barrier	Individual	%	Group	%
	n		*n*	
Concerns about administrators' perceptions of movement being incorporated	19	11.95	6	5.22
Concerns about teachers' perceptions about movement being incorporated	26	16.35	12	10.43
Other	8	5.03	4	3.48
I haven't encountered any barriers	38	23.90	24	20.87

Note: N = 159 for individual, N = 115 for group

Surprising to this researcher was the fact that almost 24% of respondents (*n*=38) indicated they hadn't encountered barriers for incorporating movement into individual counseling sessions and 20.87% of respondents (*n*=24) indicated no barriers for small group counseling. This is hopeful for school counselors who want to implement more movement practices in their counseling sessions. Another item to note is that concerns over perceptions of teachers and administrators were listed as a barrier in individual counseling for just over 28% (*n*=45) of respondents. This was not listed as highly for group counseling, with 15.65% (*n*=18) of respondents listing that as a barrier.

Lack of space was the highest chosen barrier to incorporating movement in both individual (52.20%, *n*=83) and small group (60.87%, *n*=70) sessions, followed by lack of time to incorporate into sessions (individual 37.11%, *n*=59, group 40.00%, *n*=46), and finally lack of funds to purchase items (individual 30.82%, *n*=49, group 33.04%, *n*=38).

Participants could also indicate "other" and specify what additional barriers they encounter regarding individual counseling. Eight participants (5.03%) indicated they encountered another barrier. Barriers included student and situation appropriateness (*n*=6), location (*n*=1), and perceived usefulness (*n*=1). Barriers related to student and situation

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appropriateness included concern for student safety if the student got too excited and got hurt, student ability and desire to participate, and concern about parent perception specifically related to yoga. One participant indicated their office was located in between classrooms and was concerned about the noise level when using movement. One participant indicated they did not believe in the efficacy of movement in individual counseling sessions.

Four participants (3.48%) indicated that they had encountered a different barrier than what was listed for small group counseling. The barriers included time (n=2), energy level (n=1), and weather (n=1). Respondents indicated that the time of a group session (such as during lunch) could prevent them from incorporating movement. One respondent said some group members can be "too excited" and it can be difficult for them to return to class.

As has been noted in chapter 2, COVID-19 brought about many changes. To identify changes in practice and specific barriers in that timeframe, respondents were asked to identify barriers experienced since the start of the pandemic (March 2020 for the purpose of this study). These responses will be shared under results for research question 3, because that question relates specifically to COVID-19 impacts.

Research question 3: What impact has COVID-19 had on school counselor use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

As a skip question, participants were asked if they had practiced prior to the pandemic. Out of the 155 participants that completed the question, 124 indicated they were a practicing school counselor prior to the pandemic. Those 124 were asked to identify the amount of movement they used in individual and small group counseling sessions prior to their schools' COVID-19 response, as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11.

Amount of movement incorporated prior to schools' COVID-19 response

Amount of movement	Individual		Group	
	n	%	*n*	%
More	13	10.40	11	8.87
Same	83	66.40	66	52.23
Less	20	16.00	16	12.90
I do not, and have not, incorporated movement	6	4.80	8	6.45
I do not conduct individual/group sessions at my school site(s)	3	2.40	23	18.55

Note: N = 125 for individual, N = 124 for group

It has been noted that COVID-19 affected practices in schools, and it was of interest to see if school counselors' use of movement was affected by their schools' response to the pandemic. Over half of respondents, 66.40% for individual and 52.23% for small group, indicated they incorporated the same amount of movement prior to their schools' COVID-19 response. For both individual and small group responses, there were more respondents that indicated they used less movement than more movement prior to the pandemic response. This indicates that a group of respondents (individual 16.00%, group 12.90%) now, post-pandemic, incorporate more movement.

The barriers that participants experienced were asked in two questions of the survey. In these questions, participants indicated all the barriers they experienced in using movement since the beginning of the pandemic in individual sessions (question 20) and small groups (question 22). Results are in Table 4.12. To note, participants could check all that apply so the total responses may exceed the total respondents.

Table 4.12.

Barriers to incorporating movement into individual and small group counseling sessions since the beginning of the pandemic

Barrier	Individual	%	Group	%
	n		*n*	
Personal and/or student health concerns	38	30.65	33	26.83
Lack of training/ideas on how to provide movement during telemental health sessions	22	17.74	16	13.01
Health/safety concerns regarding cleaning props and toys	53	42.74	44	35.77
Safety concerns about students keeping on masks	26	20.97	27	21.95
Lack of ideas on how to incorporate and keep students and myself safe	14	11.29	18	14.63
Not holding in-person or synchronous counseling sessions/lack of access to student(s)	39	31.45	31	25.20
Other	8	6.45	12	9.76
I haven't encountered any barriers	39	31.45	25	20.33
I have not incorporated movement into individual/group counseling sessions	7	5.65	6	4.88
I do not conduct individual/group sessions at my school site(s)	2	1.61	23	18.7

Note: N = 124 for individual, N = 123 for group

The most indicated barrier for both individual (42.74%, *n*=53) and group (35.77%, *n*=44) counseling sessions was health/safety concerns regarding cleaning props and toys. This may not be surprising, especially considering the recommendations and regulations schools needed to follow. Personal and/or student health concerns (individual 30.65%, *n*=38, group 26.83%, *n*=33) and not holding in-person sessions or lack of access to students (individual 31.45%, *n*=39, group 25.20%, *n*=31) were among the most chosen barriers for both individual and group sessions. In addition, survey participants could indicate "other" and specify the barriers they experienced. Eight participants (6.45%) reported they experienced a barrier other than what was listed for individual counseling. Those responses include student interest (*n*=2), age (*n*=1), location (*n*=1), and material availability (*n*=1). Three of the responses regarding barriers indicated that the

barriers have lessened or are no longer present and did not specify what barriers were

experienced.

Twelve respondents (9.76%) indicated "other" and specified additional barriers they had

experienced regarding groups. Those barriers include lack of space (*n*=3), ability to hold groups

(*n*=2), student interest (*n*=2), time (*n*=1), and materials (*n*=1). Two respondents indicated that

they modified their practices or that the "barriers have lessened as years go on" but did not

specify the barriers. Additionally, participants were asked about district policy affecting the

ability to hold groups. Sixteen participants (13.01%) indicated that a barrier they encountered

was the district policy not allowing counselors to hold groups. It is also important to note

respondents who reported no barriers. Almost 32% of respondents (*n*=39) reported not

encountering barriers for incorporating movement in individual sessions and 20.33% of

respondents (*n*=25) reported the same for group counseling.

Lastly, survey participants were able to write freely about new types of movement they

have used in their counseling sessions since the beginning of the pandemic. Some of these new

types of movement were used in face-to-face sessions, and some in telemental health sessions.

Because this was a forced completion question, respondents had the option to indicate if it was

not applicable by typing N/A in the textbox. Forty-four participants included a response to this

question. Respondent responses closely aligned with the options listed in the movement

incorporation questions for individual and group counseling sessions (questions five and 12).

Responses included games (*n*=12), going for a walk (*n*=9), playing with sand or playdoh (*n*=6),

coloring, painting or drawing (*n*=4), playing with a ball (*n*=4), seating that allows for movement

(*n*=4), using toys and props (*n*=4), utilizing a whiteboard or smartboard (*n*=3), yoga (*n*=3),

making crafts (*n*=2), role playing (*n*=2), and using fidgets (*n*=2). Additional responses included

using more online activities (*n*=10), muscle movement (*n*=4), dancing (*n*=3), mindfulness activities (*n*=3), play therapy (*n*=1), using therapy dogs (*n*=1), and general comments about utilizing more movement incorporation into individual and small group sessions (*n*=6).

Research question 4: Have school counselors received training regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

It is of great interest for this researcher if participants had received training regarding movement. The answer to this research question can inform future implications for professional practice and graduate training. Participants were asked to self-report their level of knowledge of incorporating movement into individual and small group counseling sessions. Those results are also listed under research question number one.

Participants were also asked to indicate if they had received education and/or training on how to incorporate movement into individual and/or small group counseling sessions. Of the 162 participants who completed the question, 69 indicated they had received some sort of training or education. Table 4.13 shows the breakdown of how respondents received training.

Table 4.13.

Education or training received on incorporating movement into individual and small group counseling sessions

Education / Training	*n*	%
Graduate Counseling Coursework	8	11.59
Outside of Counseling Coursework (conferences, workshops, readings, etc.)	34	49.28
Both	27	39.13

Note: N = 69

Over half of the study participants had not received training on utilizing movement in counseling sessions. Of those who had received training, 49.28% of them received it outside of their graduate counseling coursework, and almost 40% received education on movement

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incorporation from both graduate counseling coursework and training outside of graduate schooling. Consideration should be given to when participants graduated from their counseling programs. This will be included in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the findings of the online survey completed by practicing school counselors. One hundred eighty participants began the survey, with 153 completing it in its entirety. Findings were reported in the context of the applicable research questions. Preliminary comparisons between findings for individual and small group counseling sessions were shared. In the next chapter the limitations of the present study, along with implications for future research and practice will be discussed.

CHAPTER V

Results of the online survey were reported in chapter four and will be discussed in more detail in the current chapter. First, study findings will be discussed within the context of each of the four research questions. The chapter will continue with study limitations, implications for training, and implications for future research.

Discussion of Findings

Study participants had a variety of experience ranging from less than a year to over 20 years of school counseling experience. Over 50% of respondents had 11 or more years of school counseling experience. Study participants were from across the nation, with 26 states represented. All areas of the nation were represented within the study participants. School counselors who participated in the study worked with PreK-12 students. There was relatively equal representation from elementary, middle, and high school levels, with slightly more participants indicating they worked with grades 9-12. Over 85% of participants hold a master's degree, with all participants holding advanced degrees. Most participants were White/Caucasian (86.27%) and female (88.24%).

The discussion of findings will be shared within the context of the four research questions.

Research question one: What are school counselor attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

Overall, participants in the study believed that the incorporation of movement was useful. Only one participant indicated movement was not useful at all in individual sessions, and three participants indicated movement was not useful at all in small group sessions. Although this is a

small number of participants, this demonstrates that not everyone who participated in the study believed in the power of movement.

Over 75% of participants indicated they believe the incorporation of movement into individual sessions is very or extremely useful. The number of respondents reporting the same for group sessions was 68.49%. Survey participants were asked if they found movement incorporation helpful, but not to describe how they determine its usefulness or effectiveness. By reviewing the open-ended question responses, the researcher was able to glean some ideas of why participants find movement helpful.

Interestingly, even though less than 1% ($n=1$) of participants reported movement was not useful, 6.29% ($n=10$) of participants who conduct individual counseling at their schools reported they never incorporated movement into individual sessions. When asked about the frequency of incorporating movement into individual sessions, the mean response was 3.17, indicating movement was incorporated into about half of sessions. The mean response for frequency of movement used in group counseling sessions was 3.38, which also indicated half of sessions. It was hypothesized that frequency of movement in group sessions would be higher than in individual sessions. Because of the evidence for using movement in classrooms, the researcher believed that school counselors would transfer this knowledge and practice more readily to small groups than individual counseling sessions.

To further understand how school counselors are incorporating movement into their counseling sessions, participants were asked to check all the ways they incorporate movement from a list provided. The researcher was surprised to learn that yoga was not one of the most used forms (individual 16.98%, $n=27$, group 21.55%, $n=25$). When the researcher discussed the study with others, many times yoga would be one of the first ideas suggested. Perhaps the use of

yoga is not higher due to religious reasons or training needed. Participants commented specifically on this: "I do not do yoga or any meditation type movement because I am not trained, nor do I wish to be trained" and "Concern about parents' perception of movement such as yoga. We have had some parents misunderstand yoga as having religious affiliations. I use mindful stretches, movements, walks instead". These same concerns have appeared in research on teachers incorporating movement into classrooms (Wiegman, 2015).

There was not an option listed that did not have at least a few responses. Three percent of both individual and small group responses indicated movement was not used in individual or small group counseling sessions. Games and coloring, painting, and drawing were among the top four ways participants incorporated movement into group and individual sessions. Perhaps these options were among the highest because there is easier access to them, and some games can readily be adjusted to meet counseling needs.

Using fidgets and manipulatives was the most-chosen response for movement in individual sessions, with 86.16% of respondents indicating they had used them. Going for a walk was the second most chosen response for individual counseling, at 78.62%. This was surprising but makes sense when putting the information together. ASCA Ethical Standards (American School Counselor Association, 2022) require that school counselors be mindful of confidentiality in counseling sessions. It was assumed that school counselors may be cautious and therefore less likely to utilize walking. Since lack of space was listed as a barrier for many school counselors (52.20% for individual sessions, 60.87% for group sessions), perhaps this is a way that they work with the small size of office but still incorporate movement.

Writing on whiteboards (small or large) or Smartboard was chosen as a way that movement has been used in group sessions by 69.83% of respondents. When responding on new

types of movement used in counseling sessions since the beginning of the pandemic, one participant responded, "More seated movement like personal white board games". Perhaps using more individual items, such as personal white boards, is a way that school counselors are navigating health concerns while continuing to incorporate movement. This also could be linked to seeing this practice in classrooms and linking it to group counseling sessions.

The researcher assumed that student age/group member ages would be the most chosen response regarding the factor that was considered when determining whether to incorporate movement. Although that factor was in the top three most chosen responses for both individual (66.67%) and group (68.70%), it was not the most chosen response for either. For individual counseling, presenting concern was chosen by 79.25% of respondents as a factor considered when deciding to incorporate movement. In survey responses, participants indicated that not all situations or topics are appropriate for movement, specifically noting the severity of the situation. It is difficult to know what situations or presenting concerns specifically were determined to not need movement incorporated. Relationships with students was a factor chosen by 66.04% of respondents regarding individual counseling. It would be interesting to research this further; this may be due to knowing the needs of students such as abilities and IEP needs.

Space always seems to be a consideration when considering movement. It may not be shocking to learn that 84.35% of participants who conduct group counseling reported considering the size of their office/counseling space when deciding whether to use movement. Presenting concern or topic was also chosen by many respondents, with 80.00% indicating that is a consideration. Like individual counseling, it would be helpful to learn more about group topics that are deemed more or less appropriate for movement.

A common factor that is considered when determining to use movement or not in both individual and group sessions is student/group member age(s). This factor was chosen by over two-thirds of respondents for both individual and group counseling. Responses throughout the survey showed varying mindsets about the age appropriateness of movement. Responses varied from all ages needing movement, movement helping high schoolers stay engaged, movement helping middle school students be engaged, to not using movement because it wasn't as necessary at certain ages. One specific response brought out the seemingly different perspectives of the needs of elementary, middle, and high school students: "In my counselor program my individual and group counseling courses did not highlight using movement in sessions, and I believe that is because most programs focus on becoming a high school counselor (maybe intermediate). As an elementary counselor I have to incorporate some type of movement in order to have my students stay focused and engaged". There is a belief for some that movement is only required for younger students; this could be an area for further education and research.

To further address this research question, participants were asked to indicate why they do and do not incorporate movement in individual and small group counseling sessions. Five themes were identified regarding why participants use movement. These themes were (1) *increase student skills and functioning* ($n=111$), (2) *increase engagement and attention* ($n=62$), (3) *increase comfort* ($n=55$), (4) *need for movement* ($n=32$), and (5) *increase enjoyment* ($n=14$).The themes aligned with much of what the research says about movement and learning. Since many of the study participants reported not having training on the topic of movement and movement in counseling, it could be helpful to provide information so counselors can link practices to research; it is evident that they are already seeing the benefits already backed up by research.

Two themes that stuck out, specifically because they were not related to student learning, attention, or engagement were *increase comfort* and *increase enjoyment*. It was surprising to this researcher that *increase comfort* was not listed as the highest response (55 respondents). When discussing the dissertation topic with school counselors and counseling professionals, a common comment was that movement was used to distract students or clients from the difficult topics being discussed and movement could put them at ease. It is possible that the participants of this study have read about the many benefits of movement and applied them to the work of counseling. Using movement to increase enjoyment was also surprising to the researcher. Nine respondents mentioned that incorporating movement is fun; one participant shared that it is more fun for the student and the school counselor. Capitalizing on this theme to encourage more movement could be beneficial, since it would not seem like just one more thing to do in sessions. In the current world of education, it seems like anyone would welcome more fun in their day.

If it is important to ask why participants incorporated movement into sessions, it is just as important to ask why they did not incorporate movement. Many of the responses aligned with barrier options that were chosen (see research question 2 for more discussion) and were categorized into three themes: 1) *environmental fit*, 2) *student fit*, and 3) *counselor fit*. One respondent commented that movement is not used because it is useless. Other responses identified a specific barrier or concern with fit or appropriateness of using movement.

Environmental fit encompasses some of the barriers discussed previously in this section, such as lack of space, concern about confidentiality, and lack of materials and time, perceptions of school staff, safety concerns, and outside of job scope. Lack of materials likely will be a concern for many school counselors, as budget cuts and dwindling funds are constant discussions at district and state level meetings. Lack of time is a reason that could be mitigated by ideas

provided to school counselors on how to incorporate movement into sessions. By providing ideas to school counselors, the time needed to plan could be cut down and ideas on how to intentionally incorporate movement into sessions, rather than it being an add-on to the session, could be shared. Potentially this would cut down on the number of school counselors who list time as a reason movement is not used in counseling sessions. This aligns with the findings of Mulhearn et al. (2020) who researched teachers implementing physical activity into their lesson plans. Simple plans were preferred, so they could quickly and easily implement the activities.

The theme of *student fit* encompassed ideas brought up earlier this in section, such as age appropriateness, student and topic appropriateness, and student behaviors, and student interest. Again, the researcher questions if some of these reasons would be addressed by school counselors having more ideas and knowledge about how to incorporate movement meaningfully into sessions. Age-appropriate ways to incorporate movement could address the question of age appropriateness, and ways to incorporate movement meaningfully into sessions could address the concern of student behavior/misbehavior. As listed in the implications for research and training sections, this is an area for further research and training.

The theme of *counselor fit* encompassed lack of confidence and training to incorporate movement in counseling sessions, along with lack of planning. Just like the themes listed previously, the researcher believes that training and curriculum ideas could provide the skills and knowledge needed. By providing curriculum and/or specific ideas, school counselors would not need much additional time to plan since the ideas would be created already. Lack of confidence and training could be addressed by books, articles, and training specific to this topic.

The final open-ended question of the survey asked participants what they would like us (research team) to know about the integration of movement into school counseling. Fifty-three

responses were reviewed for this question. Five themes were identified in response to this question: 1) *benefits/importance of movement*, 2) *information request*, 3) *age factor*, 4) *insight and reflection*, and 5) *barriers*.

There were many (*n*=24) responses regarding the *importance of movement* in school counseling. Many of the responses aligned with what the research has to say about the benefits of movement. This finding matches previous research of classroom teachers and their implementation of physical activity breaks in classrooms (Barcelona et al., 2022). When teachers (who had been provided professional development on the topic) were asked why they used physical activity in their classes, they responded with their knowledge on the topic and benefits for students. Interestingly, the training of teachers for many served as a catalyst for further research.

The next most common theme was *information request*. Participants were asking for more information, training, and research on this topic. This request for information reflects the lack of resources available that directly address the topic of movement in school counseling. The themes of *age factor* and *barriers* were also highlighted in previous question responses. *Insight and reflection* was of interest, since it highlighted that two participants realized they incorporated movement more than they thought: "Upon thinking about [it], I use movement in every individual, group, and classroom setting" and "I didn't think I used movement in sessions until I realized that I sometimes play games with students, go for a walk and talk, go out and play catch and those count as movement. I was only thinking of yoga or exercise, etc.". It is possible that by solely participating in this study, participant use of movement will increase. Perhaps participants got new ideas about how to incorporate movement, were reminded of its importance from what

they had already learned or were alerted to the fact they can incorporate it in ways other than vigorous exercise.

Research question two: What barriers do school counselors encounter that make it difficult to incorporate movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

Respondents indicated that lack of space was a major barrier preventing the incorporation of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions. This was expected by the researcher, since many counselors report having tiny offices and not much room for group members to spread out. Lack of time to incorporate movement into sessions has also been a major barrier to participants, regarding both individual and small group sessions. The lack of time could be connected to the number of times or length of time of individual sessions. One respondent noted that they may do 2-3 minute check-ins with students, and another mentioned seeing students one or two times for individual counseling sessions. This was not noted for the majority of respondents, and also doesn't link to small group counseling sessions, which usually are set for a specific amount of time and a set number of sessions. Having more ideas on how to incorporate movement into both individual and small group sessions could help alleviate this barrier for school counselors. Lomsdahl et al. (2022) discovered similar findings in research on classroom teachers integrating movement. Time was a barrier for teachers because it required time for planning, time for the activity, and time away from the content matter (if movement was approached as separate from the lesson or topic of the day).

Lack of funds to purchase items was noted for 30.82% of respondents as a barrier for individual counseling and 33.04% of respondents as a barrier for group counseling. With budget cuts seemingly ever-present in schools, this barrier likely will not go away anytime soon. One respondent indicated it would be helpful to have "information on how school counselors can

advocate the benefits of movement to admin[istration] for buy in when it comes to purchasing resources/materials". Education and training on movement and its benefits could aid in addressing this barrier.

The researcher found it interesting that 28.30% of respondents indicated concerns over teacher and administrator perceptions was a barrier to incorporating movement into individual sessions. As with the previous barrier discussed, education and advocacy could help school counselors address this barrier. It could be helpful for school counselors who encounter this barrier to provide training and education for teachers and administration, although the school counselors may need training and information themselves first.

Although this researcher was concerned about barriers that prevent school counselors from incorporating movement, the results provided some hope. Almost 24% of respondents reported not encountering barriers that prevented them from incorporating movement in individual counseling sessions, and 20.87% of respondents reported not encountering barriers for group counseling. Barriers are present, that is for sure, but it is reassuring to know that barriers are not present for all school counselors who may want to incorporate movement into sessions.

Research question three: What impact has COVID-19 had on school counselor use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

School counselors were asked to reflect on the impact COVID-19 had on their practices regarding movement. The responses to COVID-19 at participant school sites did not appear to cause a large change in the frequency of movement incorporation in individual sessions for most respondents. Most (66.40%) reported using the same amount of movement in individual sessions prior to their school's COVID=19 response. Results were similar for small group counseling, with 53.23% of respondents reporting using the same amount of movement. Although there was

not an increase in movement for most respondents, 16.00% of respondents reported using movement less in individual sessions prior to the pandemic, and 12.90% of respondents reported using less movement in group sessions prior to the pandemic. What does this mean? Post-pandemic 16.00% of respondents are incorporating movement more in individual sessions and 12.90% are incorporating movement more into group counseling sessions. This increase can further the need for training in movement for school counselors.

Participants were asked to report barriers they experienced regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions since the beginning of the pandemic. The most reported barrier reported by participants for both individual and group sessions was health/safety concerns regarding cleaning props and toys, followed by personal and/or student health concerns and not holding in-person sessions or lack of access to students. Regarding cleaning props and toys, one participant reported that "I have returned [to the] use of movement in group and individual sessions since post covid protocols have diminished or have been eliminated. I am much more conscious still about cleaning toys/fidgets or other materials used during sessions." Although the safety and health concerns may not be as concerning to participants now, it is evident that many are still considering the transmission of germs and illnesses. Another respondent wrote "I have found a variety of games and other toys that are easy to clean."

Personal and/or student health concerns were also a barrier for incorporating movement into individual and group counseling sessions. One respondent noted "Students have become less interested in participating in activities post COVID". This researcher wonders if part of the lack of interest lies in concerns about personal health and safety. Not having access to students in-

person links to the training potentially needed regarding incorporation of movement in virtual sessions, which will be discussed in the implications section of this chapter.

Participants were also asked to share new types of movement they incorporated into counseling sessions since the beginning of the pandemic. Most of the responses aligned with the options that were listed in previous survey questions (questions 5 and 12). It is possible that respondents listed these ways of incorporating movement because the options were on their minds due to seeing them earlier in the survey. The four most listed ways of incorporating movement included games, using more online activities, going for a walk, and playing with sand or playdoh. It was surprising that going for a walk was a new way of incorporating movement for some respondents, but it is possible that school counselors and students wanted to be outside and not near each other due to health concerns. There may not have been as high a concern for lack of confidentiality due to less people being outside and less students in the school building. One respondent indicated using "more walks initially when we didn't want to be sitting in a small office".

Research question four: Have school counselors received training regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions?

Because the survey was anonymous, participants were asked to self-report their level of knowledge of incorporating movement into individual and small group counseling sessions. Over half of respondents (57.41%, *n*=93) had not received education or training on the survey topic. However, when asked about their perceived level of knowledge on how to incorporate movement into individual counseling sessions, 52.41% of respondents indicated they were very or extremely knowledgeable. Although not as high, 48.49% of respondents indicated being very or extremely knowledgeable on how to incorporate movement into small group counseling sessions.

Comments from participants such as "I have picked bits and pieces from places. More training directly related to movement in counseling would be a great idea" and "This hasn't been something explicitly taught to me before but rather something that I've just incorporated knowing it's developmentally helpful and appropriate" indicate that some school counselors may find themselves using movement but have not taken part in any training. Perhaps the availability of more books that address movement, such as *Spark* (Ratey & Hagerman, 2008) and *How the Body Knows Its Mind* (Beilock, 2015) have offered more information on the overall topic, albeit not directly applying the concepts to counseling. In addition, more trauma-informed trainings are happening in schools across the country. With the information available regarding movement and trauma care in books such as *The Body Keeps the Score* (van der Kolk, 2014) and *Heal the Body Heal the Mind* (Babbel, 2018), it is possible that school counselors have been gathering information on movement without seeing its direct correlation to counseling practices.

It is also important to note that 54.9% of respondents had 11 or more years of school counseling experience, meaning they graduated in the year 2013 or earlier. It is possible that graduate counseling coursework has changed since they graduated and may incorporate more movement. As one respondent stated, "I don't think it [movement] was a point of emphasis when [I] was trained as a school counselor. I am in my 27th year and my training was more focused on verbal communication and body language."

Study Limitations

As is to be expected, the current study has limitations that need to be acknowledged. One of the study limitations is that the present study only includes members of ASCA or state school counselor associations. This population may not be representative of all school counselors in the United States or its territories. Also, representation was not gained from any of the United States

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territories. It is possible that beliefs and perceptions as well as barriers to incorporating movement into individual and small group counseling sessions and school COVID-19 responses would be different for school counselors practicing in a US territory. Therefore, findings from the current study cannot be generalized to all school counselors in the United States and its territories.

It is possible that school counselors who are interested in incorporating movement and believe in its benefits were more likely to initiate and complete the online survey. With growing numbers of research requests, practicing school counselors may not respond to all received requests and focus only on those about which they are passionate or knowledgeable. It is difficult to hypothesize if the general population of school counselors in the United States and its territories would have similar perceived levels of knowledge and frequency of movement incorporation as the current study participants.

Most of the survey participants practiced in an on-campus or face-to-face setting. There were responses about how participants incorporated more online movement-incorporating activities due to COVID-19 school responses, but those cannot necessarily be applied to specifically online sessions. The responses presented in chapter IV are representative of school counselors encountering their student-clients in-person.

Also, the survey instrument relied on participant self-reporting. There is no way to verify if their responses were accurate, especially regarding how often they incorporate movement and how they do so. Because the survey was anonymous, it is hoped that participants were honest in their responses. The study recruitment flier (see Appendix C) stated that the researcher wanted to learn more about school counselor incorporation of movement and that training in movement was not necessary. Although there were no right or wrong responses, participants may have

assumed they should answer in a certain way and that may have influenced their responses. Additionally, the survey tool psychometrics were not established. This should be considered when determining if the present survey tool is appropriate for future studies.

Lastly, the study was exploratory and did not set out to identify correlations between specific school counselor demographics and specific beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. While this was the plan, there are notable limitations, such as not being able to identify school counselor beliefs working with specific grades or areas in the United States. From the present results, it is not possible to know if school counselors at the elementary, middle, high school, or PreK-12 settings act or believe differently. This could be an area for future research.

Implications for Practice and Training

A theme that emerged from the question on what study participants wanted us to know about the incorporation of movement into individual and small group counseling sessions was the need for more training and information. Information should be collected and provided to school counselors so they can 1) understand the benefits of incorporating movement, 2) gather ideas on how to incorporate movement into both individual and small group counseling sessions, and 3) advocate for the incorporation of movement when talking with administrators and teachers. This information can be infused into graduate counseling programs and delivered to practicing school counselors through workshops, books, and continuing education. By learning more about the benefits, school counselors can move into a more professional role (applying the information and understanding the theory behind it) rather than technician role (using techniques without understanding the theory behind it). They won't simply be incorporating movement because it feels good; they will know the rationale behind the practice. As one participant noted, they wanted more ideas and the research behind the benefits. Along with providing the research

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behind the methods, additional ways to incorporate movement will be beneficial to practitioners and students, with a special focus on how to use available technology. Physical education programs have advocated for the integration of more technology, and the same could be applied to school counseling (Carson & Webster, 2020).

Graduate counseling programs should review how they teach counseling skills and the incorporation of movement (if they even address it!) in counseling sessions. Comments such as "Maybe that this [incorporating movement] has not been a big strong point that was ever covered in any of my training and probably should have been" and "I didn't realize that incorporating movement was a 'thing' to do during individual and/or group counseling" demonstrate the need for instruction and training. Sharing the benefits of movement, how movement can aid in accomplishing goals of counseling, and how to use movement in counseling sessions would be useful to graduate counseling students. Adding movement incorporation in counseling sessions should be included in the next update of the CACREP standards, to ensure that more programs are addressing this need.

School counselors should continue (or begin) to incorporate movement into individual and group counseling sessions with students of all ages. Most of the study participants believed movement was useful for a variety of reasons. It will benefit school counselors and the students they serve to incorporate movement into their counseling sessions. Along with practice, school counselors should engage in training opportunities when they are available so they can continue to learn about this topic. School counselors serve as leaders in their schools and can advocate for movement in counseling sessions, and potentially more movement in the school day. School counselors can use the ASCA National Model and the Whole Child Approach, to start having discussions within their school buildings.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the study results and study limitations, there are recommendations for future research. The current study did not have any school counselors practicing in online schools. Due to the potential demand for more online schooling and more schools offering virtual learning days, future research could focus on movement incorporation as it relates school counseling online. Studies focused on school counselor experiences during COVID-19 (Roberts et al., 2023; Worth, 2022) also shared recommendations for continuing research regarding best practices online. *The School Counselor and Virtual School Counseling* (American School Counselor Association, 2023b) position statement tells school counselors that they must engage in best practices in online settings. Future research must continue to identify best practices for working with students virtually.

As was mentioned in the limitations, the present study was exploratory and did not aim to identify correlation or causation. Future research could focus on beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and barriers specific to grade level(s) served, school setting, and graduate training. Additionally, future studies could analyze qualitative data through the lens of years of experience and grade levels served. By having this information, a more tailored approach could be crafted to address barriers and provide educational opportunities.

Additionally, future research could ask more specifically about what student characteristics and situations/presenting concerns seem more or less appropriate for incorporating movement. For example, some participants indicated using movement in sessions with students on IEPs who are known to need movement breaks. Remarks were made regarding how well the school counselor knows the student can also impact the decision to incorporate movement. Respondents also commented that if the topic was serious or severe, they may not

use movement in that session. It would be helpful to more clearly understand these responses so as to focus continuing education opportunities.

Future research could also include a study in which training and education are provided to school counselors regarding incorporating movement and the effects on the school counselor, students served, and school staff are evaluated. Providing training to participants would ensure all are entering the study with the same knowledge, and not solely based on self-rated levels of knowledge. Also, although the benefits to student-clients are mentioned in the participant responses in the present study, the results of movement are not quantified and directly researched.

The present study focused on school counselors and their work in schools. Future research could focus on the counseling field as a whole and aim to learn about counseling in all settings and with all ages of clients. With this topic, the possibilities could be endless!

Conclusion

The current exploratory mixed methods study aimed to address four research questions: 1) What are school counselor attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding the use of individual and small group movement? 2) What barriers do school counselors encounter that make it difficult to incorporate movement in individual and small group movement? 3) What impact has COVID-19 had on school counselor use of movement in individual and small group counseling? 4) Have school counselors received training regarding the use of movement in individual and small group counseling? Using a mixed methods, concurrent embedded strategy, the researcher addressed the research questions by administering an online survey to participating school counselors.

Recommendations are to provide training and resources for school counselors so they can increase their knowledge on the benefits of the use of movement and be able to advocate to

school staff. School counselors will benefit from ideas on how to incorporate movement, which can mitigate some potential barriers. These resources, along with further research to directly study the impacts of the use of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions could add to the body of research on the current topic.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

<u>School Counselors' Use of Movement in Small Group and Individual Counseling Sessions</u>

<u>To participate in this study, you:</u>
-must be a practicing school counselor in the United States or its territories
-must be fully licensed/credentialed school counselor

Are you a practicing school counselor in the United States or its territories?
Yes
No *(if no, will go to end of survey)*

Are you a fully licensed/credentialed school counselor?
Yes
No *(if no, will go to end of survey)*

For this survey, the following definition of "movement" from Merriam-Webster will be used**: the act or process of moving;** *especially* **: change of place or position or posture.**

For purposes of this study, here are some examples of how movement can be incorporated into individual and group counseling sessions. Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

-yoga

-writing on whiteboard (small or large) or smartboard

-games (board games, card games, etc.)

-activity that requires student to move from place to place

-using "fidgets" or other manipulatives

-using props and toys

-having student switch chairs/spots

-going for a walk

-coloring, painting, drawing

-seating that allows for movement (exercise ball, wobble chair, etc.)

-making a craft

> -movement with videos (ex: GoNoodle)
>
> -role playing, acting
>
> -using sand, playdough, clay
>
> -tossing a ball

1. Please indicate your perceived level of knowledge on how to incorporate movement into INDIVIDUAL counseling sessions.

1	2	3	4	5
No knowledge	Slightly knowledgeable	Moderately knowledgeable	Very knowledgeable	Extremely knowledgeable

2. How useful do you perceive the use of movement is in INDIVIDUAL counseling sessions?

1	2	3	4	5
Not useful at all	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful

3. Do you conduct individual counseling at your school(s)?
   Yes
   No (*If no, the survey will skip to question 8*)

4. Please indicate how often you incorporate movement into INDIVIDUAL counseling sessions.

1	2	3	4	5
Never in sessions	Some sessions	About half of sessions	Most sessions	All sessions

5. Please indicate how you currently incorporate, or have incorporated, movement into INDIVIDUAL counseling sessions. (check all that apply)
   Yoga
   Writing on whiteboard (small or large) or Smartboard
   Games (board games, card games, etc.)
   Activity that requires student to move from place to place
   Using "fidgets" or other manipulatives
   Using props and toys
   Having student switch chairs/spots
   Going for a walk
   Coloring, painting, drawing
   Seating that allows for movement (ex: exercise ball, wobble chair, etc)
   Making a craft
   Movement with videos (ex: GoNoodle)

Role playing, acting
Using sand, playdough, or clay
Tossing a ball
Other (please indicate)
I do not incorporate movement into individual counseling

6.   What factor(s) do you consider when making the decision to incorporate movement into INDIVIDUAL counseling sessions? (Check all that apply)
Student age
Student gender identity
Student presenting concern
Student learning/developmental level
Student physical abilities
Size of office/counseling space
Relationship with the student/how well you know the student
Other (please specify)
I do not consider any factors when deciding to incorporate movement
I do not incorporate movement into individual counseling

7.   What barrier(s) prevent you, or have prevented you, from incorporating movement into INDIVIDUAL counseling sessions? (Check all that apply)
Lack of space
Lack of training on how to incorporate movement
Lack of ideas on how to incorporate movement
Lack of confidence in using movement
Lack of knowledge of how to navigate confidentiality if not in an office / classroom
Lack of funds to purchase items to use
Lack of items to use
Lack of time to incorporate into session
Concerns about administrators' perceptions of movement being incorporated
Concerns about teachers' perceptions of movement being incorporated
Other (please specify)
I haven't encountered any barriers

8.   Please indicate your perceived level of knowledge on how to incorporate movement into GROUP counseling sessions.

1	2	3	4	5
No knowledge	Slightly knowledgeable	Moderately knowledgeable	Very knowledgeable	Extremely knowledgeable

9.   How useful do you perceive the use of movement is in GROUP counseling sessions?

1	2	3	4	5
Not useful at all	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful

10.   Do you conduct group counseling at your school(s)?

Yes

No (*If no, the survey will skip to question 15)*

11. Please indicate how often you incorporate movement into <u>GROUP</u> counseling sessions.

1	2	3	4	5
Never in sessions	Some sessions	About half of sessions	Most sessions	All sessions

12. Please indicate the ways you currently incorporate, or have incorporated, movement into <u>GROUP</u> counseling sessions. (Check all that apply)
Yoga
Writing on whiteboard (small or large) or Smartboard
Games (board games, card games, etc.)
Activity that requires student to move from place to place
Using "fidgets" or other manipulatives
Using props and toys
Having student switch chairs/spots
Going for a walk
Coloring, painting, drawing
Seating that allows for movement (ex: exercise ball, wobble chair, etc)
Making a craft
Movement with videos (ex: GoNoodle)
Role playing, acting
Using sand, playdough, or clay
Tossing a ball
Other (please indicate)
I do not incorporate movement into group counseling

13. What factor(s) do you consider when making the decision to incorporate movement into <u>GROUP</u> counseling sessions? (Check all that apply)
Group members' ages
Group members' gender identities
Group topic/presenting concern
Group members' learning/developmental levels
Group members' physical abilities
Size of office/counseling space
Relationship with the group members/how well you know the group members
Other (please specify)
I do not consider any factors when deciding to incorporate movement
I do not incorporate movement into group counseling

14. What barrier(s) prevent you, or have prevented you, from incorporating movement into <u>GROUP</u> counseling sessions? (Check all that apply):
Lack of space
Lack of training on how to incorporate movement
Lack of ideas on how to incorporate movement

Lack of confidence in using movement
Lack of knowledge of how to navigate confidentiality if not in an office / classroom
Lack of funds to purchase items to use
Lack of items to use
Lack of time to incorporate into session
Concerns about administrators' perceptions of movement being incorporated
Concerns about teachers' perceptions of movement being incorporated
Other (please specify)
I haven't encountered any barriers

15.   Have you received education and/or training on how to incorporate movement into individual and/or group counseling sessions?
Yes *(if yes, then proceed to question 15b)*
No

15b.
What kind of education and/or training did you receive?
Graduate Counseling Coursework
Outside of Counseling Coursework (conferences, workshops, readings, etc.)
Both

16.   What are the reasons you incorporate movement in individual and/or group counseling sessions? (enter N/A if not applicable)
| Short answer |

17.   What are the reasons you do not incorporate movement in individual and/or group counseling sessions? (enter N/A if not applicable)
| Short answer |

Please answer the following questions specifically related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:

18.   Were you employed as a school counselor prior to March 2020?
Yes
No (*If no, the survey will skip to question 24*)

19.   Prior to my school's/schools' COVID-19 response, the amount of movement I incorporated into <u>INDIVIDUAL</u> counseling sessions was
More
Same amount
Less
I do not, and have not, incorporated movement into individual counseling sessions
I do not conduct individual sessions at my school site(s)

20.   Since the beginning of the pandemic, please indicate any barriers you have experienced regarding using movement in <u>INDIVIDUAL</u> counseling sessions. (Check all that apply)

Personal and/or student health concerns
Lack of training/ideas on how to provide movement during telemental health sessions
Health/safety concerns regarding cleaning props and toys
Safety concerns about students keeping on masks
Lack of ideas on how to incorporate and keep students and myself safe
Not holding in-person or synchronous counseling sessions/lack of access to student
Other (please specify)
I haven't encountered any barriers
I have not incorporated movement into individual counseling sessions
I do not conduct individual sessions at my school site(s)

21. Prior to my school's/schools' COVID-19 response, the amount of movement I incorporated into <u>GROUP</u> counseling sessions was
More
Same amount
Less
I do not, and have not, incorporated movement into group counseling sessions
I do not conduct groups at my school site(s)

22. Since the beginning of the pandemic, please indicate any barriers you have experienced regarding using movement in <u>GROUP</u> counseling sessions. (Check all that apply)
District policy does/did not allow counselors to hold groups
Personal and/or student health concerns
Lack of training/ideas on how to incorporate movement during telemental health group sessions
Health/safety concerns regarding cleaning props and toys
Safety concerns about students keeping on masks
Lack of ideas on how to incorporate and keep students and myself safe
Not holding in-person or synchronous group sessions/lack of access to students
Other (please specify)
I have not encountered any barriers
I have not incorporated movement into group counseling sessions
I do not conduct groups at my school site(s)

23. Since the beginning of the pandemic, have you used new types of movement in your counseling sessions (face-to-face and/or online)?
Yes *(if yes, then proceed to question 23b)*
No

23b.
What new types of movement have you used in counseling sessions (face-to-face and/or online)?
Short answer

24.　　What else would you like us to know about the integration of movement within school
　　　 counseling practice? (If you do not have anything additional to add, type "N/A")
| Short answer |

Demographics:

This information will not be used to identify survey participants. The information below will not
be linked to your responses on the previous questions. The information you provide will be
included in overall participant demographics.

Check all the grades you work with at your school(s)
PreK　K　1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10　11　12　Prefer not to respond

Years of school counseling experience
　　　　0-5 years
　　　　6-10 years
　　　　11-15 years
　　　　16-20 years
　　　　20+ years
　　　　Prefer not to respond

State or US territory in which you work: (drop down)
　　　　Prefer not to respond

Current School setting
　　　　On-campus / face-to-face
　　　　Online
　　　　Hybrid (on-campus and online)
　　　　Prefer not to respond

Highest degree earned
　　　　Doctorate
　　　　Specialist
　　　　Master's
　　　　Bachelor's
　　　　Prefer not to respond

Gender Identity
　　　　Female
　　　　Male
　　　　Non-binary / gender fluid
　　　　How do you identify if not any of the above?
　　　　Prefer not to respond

Race/ethnicity
     American Indian
     Alaskan Native
     Asian
     Asian Indian
     Bi-racial or Multi-racial
     Black or African American
     Hispanic or Latinx
     Middle Eastern or North African
     Native Hawaiian
     Pacific Islander
     White or Caucasian
     How do you identify if not any of the above?
     Prefer not to respond

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

North Dakota State University
School of Education
NDSU Dept. 2625
P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

Title of Research Study: School Counselors' Use of Movement in Group and Individual Counseling Sessions

Please read this informed consent document in entirety before agreeing to participate.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY: It is my hope that with this research, I will learn more about school counselors and their incorporation of movement in individual and small group counseling sessions. I am interested in learning if, how, and why school counselors use movement in their sessions and if they have received training on the use of movement.

PARTICIPATION: If you are a fully credentialed/licensed school counselor currently practicing in the United States or its territories, you are invited to take part in this research project. Your participation is entirely your choice, and you may change your mind or quit participating at any time, with no penalty to you. It should take about 10 minutes to complete the questions about your current and past practices and training.

BENEFITS AND RISKS: It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but we have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known risks. You are not expected to receive any direct benefit from being in this research study. However, benefits to counselors in general are likely to include advancement of knowledge and recommendations for school counselor training and professional development.

CONFIDENTIALITY: This study is anonymous. That means that no one, not even members of the research team, will know that the information you give comes from you. This study has received IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval at NDSU (Protocol #IRB0004981).

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at ###-###-#### or amy.geinert@ndsu.edu or my dissertation chair (Dr. Carol Buchholz Holland) at 701-231-7103 or carol.e.buchholz@ndsu.edu.

You have rights as a research participant. Learn more about your rights at: https://www.ndsu.edu/research/for_researchers/research_integrity_and_compliance/participant_rights/. If you have questions about your rights or complaints about this research, you may talk to the researcher or contact the Research Integrity & Compliance office at 701-231-8995, toll-free at 1-855-800-6717, by email at ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT:
Your completion of the web-based survey implies informed consent to your survey responses for research purposes. Please print a copy of this document if you would like a record of your consent to participate in this study.

Please click on one of the options listed below:

◯ **I agree to participate in this study.**
[Selecting this option will take the participant to the survey questions]

◯ **I do not agree to participate in this study.**

APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT MESSAGES

1ST CONTACT – RECRUITMENT EMAIL
(Sent to state school counselor associations along with recruitment flier)

Greetings,

My name is Amy Geinert and I am a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision PhD program at North Dakota State University. I am conducting an online research study under the guidance of my advisor, Dr. Carol Buchholz Holland. This research study aims to examine school counselor beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding movement in small group and individual counseling sessions. Extensive knowledge of and use of movement in counseling sessions is not required for participation in the study.

If you are a fully credentialed/licensed school counselor currently practicing in the United States or its territories, I invite you to take part in the study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate in this study, you should be able to complete the survey questions in approximately 10 minutes. Your responses are requested by February 26, 2024.

We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study. Although there may be no direct benefits related to your participation in this study, the results from this study can be used to help improve and inform school counseling practices and training. NDSU's review board has approved this study (Protocol #IRB0004981).

If you are interested in participating in this study, please click on the following link:
> ***https://ndstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2r7Lw5GkUaLF5k2***
> ***(Please note that this survey link will take you to the study's informed consent document)***

Or copy the URL listed below and paste it into your internet browser:

> ***https://ndstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2r7Lw5GkUaLF5k2***
> ***(Please note that this URL link will take you to the study's informed consent document)***

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your assistance in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.

Best wishes,

Amy Geinert, M.Ed, Doctoral Candidate
North Dakota State University
School of Education
NDSU Dept. 2625
P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

2nd CONTACT – RECRUITMENT EMAIL
(Sent to state school counselor associations 2 weeks after initial message along with "final call" recruitment flier)

Greetings,

I recently invited you to participate in this study, with a goal to examine school counselor beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding movement in small group and individual counseling sessions. If you have not completed this survey, you still have an opportunity to complete it. Please submit your survey responses no later than February 26, 2024. If you have completed the survey, thank you for your participation!

If you are a fully credentialed/licensed school counselor currently practicing in the United States or its territories, please consider participating in the study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. If you choose to participate in this study, you should be able to complete the survey questions in approximately 10 minutes.

We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study. Although there may be no direct benefits related to your participation in this study, the results from this study will be used to help improve and inform school counseling practices. NDSU's review board has approved this study (Protocol #IRB0004981).

If you are interested in participating in this study, please click on the following link:

> ***https://ndstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2r7Lw5GkUaLF5k2***
> *(Please note that this survey link will take you to the study's informed consent document)*

Or copy the URL listed below and paste it into your internet browser:

> ***https://ndstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2r7Lw5GkUaLF5k2***
> *(Please note that this URL link will take you to the study's informed consent document)*

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your participation in the research study is greatly appreciated.

Best wishes,

Amy Geinert, M.Ed, Doctoral Candidate
North Dakota State University
School of Education
NDSU Dept. 2625
P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

1st CONTACT RECRUITMENT POST
(Posted to ASCA Member Community along with recruitment flier)

Subject: Call for Participants: Survey of School Counselors' Use of Movement in Small Group and Individual Counseling Sessions

This research study aims to examine school counselor beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding movement in small group and individual counseling sessions. Extensive knowledge of and use of movement in counseling sessions is not required for participation in the study.

Participants must be fully credentialed/licensed school counselors currently practicing in the United States or its territories.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. If you choose to participate in this study, you should be able to complete the survey questions in approximately 10 minutes.

If you have any questions about this study or the procedures, please contact us at

Amy Geinert   Dr. Carol Buchholz Holland (Chair)
amy.geinert@ndsu.edu   carol.e.buchholz@ndsu.edu
(###)-###-####   (701) 231-7103

If you are interested in participating in this study, please click on the following link:

https://ndstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2r7Lw5GkUaLF5k2
(Please note that this survey link will take subjects to the study's informed consent document)

2nd CONTACT – RECRUITMENT POST
(Posted to ASCA Member Community 2 weeks after initial post, along with recruitment flier)

Subject: 2nd Call for Participants: Survey of School Counselors' Use of Movement in Small Group and Individual Counseling Sessions

This research study aims to examine school counselor beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding movement in small group and individual sessions. Extensive knowledge of and use of movement in counseling sessions is not required for participation in the study.

Participants must be fully credentialed/licensed school counselors currently practicing in the United States or its territories.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. If you choose to participate in this study, you should be able to complete the survey questions in approximately 10 minutes.

If you have any questions about this study or the procedures, please contact us at

Amy Geinert   Dr. Carol Buchholz Holland (Chair)
amy.geinert@ndsu.edu   carol.e.buchholz@ndsu.edu
 (###)-###-####   (701) 231-7103

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If you are interested in participating in this study, please click on the following link:
https://ndstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2r7Lw5GkUaLF5k2
(Please note that this survey link will take subjects to the study's informed consent document)

3rd CONTACT – RECRUITMENT POST
(Posted to ASCA Member Community 4 weeks after initial post along with recruitment flier)

Subject: Call for Participants: Survey of School Counselors' Use of Movement in Small Group and Individual Counseling Sessions

This research study aims to examine school counselor beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding movement in small group and individual sessions. Extensive knowledge of and use of movement in counseling sessions is not required for participation in the study. Thank you to those who have already participated! The survey will close on February 26, 2024.

Participants must be fully credentialed/licensed school counselors currently practicing in the United States or its territories.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. If you choose to participate in this study, you should be able to complete the survey questions in approximately 10 minutes.

If you have any questions about this study or the procedures, please contact us at
Amy Geinert   Dr. Carol Buchholz Holland (Chair)
amy.geinert@ndsu.edu   carol.e.buchholz@ndsu.edu
(###)-###-####   (701) 231-7103

If you are interested in participating in this study, please click on the following link:

https://ndstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2r7Lw5GkUaLF5k2
(Please note that this survey link will take subjects to the study's informed consent document)

4th (FINAL) CONTACT – RECRUITMENT POST
(Posted to ASCA Member Community 6 weeks after initial post along with "final call" recruitment flier)

Subject: Final Call for Participants: Survey of School Counselors' Use of Movement in Small Group and Individual Counseling Sessions

This is the final call for study participants. I appreciate those who have completed the survey already - thank you! If you haven't completed the survey and are a fully credentialed/licensed school counselor practicing in the United States or its territories, please consider participating. This research study aims to examine school counselor beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding movement in small group and individual counseling sessions. Extensive knowledge of and use of movement in counseling sessions is not required for participation in the study.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the research or exit the survey at any time without penalty. If you choose to participate in this study, you should be able to complete the survey questions in approximately 10 minutes.

If you have any questions about this study or the procedures, please contact us at
Amy Geinert   Dr. Carol Buchholz Holland (Chair)
amy.geinert@ndsu.edu   carol.e.buchholz@ndsu.edu
(###)-###-####   (701) 231-7103

If you are interested in participating in this study, please click on the following link:
> ***https://ndstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2r7Lw5GkUaLF5k2***
> *(Please note that this survey link will take subjects to the study's informed consent document)*

FINAL CALL

Online survey: School Counselors' Use of Movement in Small Group and Individual Counseling Sessions

Participants Needed!

What:

Online survey to find out what school counselors are currently doing to incorporate movement and its perceived usefulness. We are also curious about training school counselors have received on movement.

To participate, you **do not** need training on movement. All fully licensed/credentialed school counselors who are currently practicing in the US or its territories are encouraged to participate!

Questions? Contact Amy Geinert at amy.geinert@ndsu.edu

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
LINK TO ONLINE SURVEY:

survey link

APPENDIX E: EMAIL TEMPLATE FOR CONTACTING STATE ASSOCIATIONS

Initial email template used for contacting state school counselor associations with no listserv information

Hello,
My name is Amy Geinert and I am a doctoral candidate at North Dakota State University (NDSU). My dissertation topic is focused on learning more about school counselors' use of movement in individual and group counseling sessions. My plan is to conduct a national study which involves school counselors from throughout the United States and its territories who will be asked to complete an online survey. In order to reach these school counselors, I am contacting state school counseling associations for assistance. Here are some questions for you:

(1) Is there a formal approval process that I need to complete before your association would be willing to send out study recruitment emails to your members?
    If yes, would you please send me more information about the approval process?

(2) If there is not a formal approval process, would your association be willing to send out 2 recruitment emails (initial email and follow-up/final email) for me which would be spaced out by two weeks?

My study has been approved by the NDSU IRB and I hope to send out my initial survey recruitment email on January 8, 2024. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information from me.
Thank you for your consideration.
Amy Geinert

Initial email template used for contacting state school counselor associations with listserv information

Hello,
My name is Amy Geinert and I am a doctoral candidate at North Dakota State University (NDSU). My dissertation topic is focused on learning more about school counselors' use of movement in individual and group counseling sessions. My plan is to conduct a national study which involves school counselors from throughout the United States and its territories who will be asked to complete an online survey. In order to reach these school counselors, I am contacting state school counseling associations for assistance. Here are some questions for you:

- Do you allow students to join the listserv with the sole purpose to post recruitment requests? I would like to post two recruitment calls (one initial call and a follow up/final call) which would be spaced out by two weeks.
- If I am not able to join the listserv, would your association be willing to send out 2 recruitment emails (initial email and follow-up/final email) for me which would be spaced out by two weeks?

My study has been approved by the NDSU IRB and I hope to send out my initial survey recruitment email on January 8, 2024. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information from me.
Thank you for your consideration.
Amy Geinert