

## Alumni Spotlight: Cynthia Fisher (MACO '99)



**Current Title:** Clinical Director & Founder of Quadra Counseling Associates, LLC, and Doctoral Student at Regent University in the Counselor Educator and Supervision Program.

**Family:** Husband, Graeme Fisher (MDiv '99); Children: Nate, Emily, & Camille

**Favorite Professor:** Dr. Pablo Polischuk & Dr. Pendleton

**Favorite Class:** Cross-Cultural Counseling, Cognitive Intellectual Evaluation, Family Counseling, or Marital Therapy

**Favorite Memory:** I loved the community with students and faculty when we would have dinner at the professor's homes. Additionally, I loved how Dr. Polischuk gave me autonomy and free rein to set up our counseling office for the internship site at Gordon College.

**What have you been doing since you left Gordon Conwell, and where are you serving now? Do you have a particular specialization?**

I have worked at three venues since graduating. My first two years were at South Bay Mental Health Center in Lowell, where I accumulated all my direct client hours and supervision hours to get my first license as an LMFT in 2001, and my LMHC license in 2003. My first child was born in 2001, and I opened up my private practice from 2002 to 2008. The practice was growing, and I could not take all the clients. Then in the summer of 2008, I started Quadra Counseling Associates, LLC as a private group practice. Starting Quadra has been a tremendous joy. It is such a privilege working with other Christian therapists and seeing God at work. Currently, my focus is on marriage, family, and domestic abuse. For my practicum in my PhD program, I just completed my 50 hours of Basic EMDR training.

**What do you love about your work?**

I love working with our team of clinicians. One of the goals of Quadra is to have a group of therapists who work very cohesively together as we serve the needs of our clients. I have been a therapist for 23 years and still love it. It is a gift to get to know my clients, help them reach their goals, and remove roadblocks. Part of what is so wonderful is being able to see the decrease in people's suffering and stress. Walking alongside my clients as they grow and their relationships become stronger is an incredible blessing.

## **What are the particular challenges of serving as a therapist in your context?**

Over the years, through practice and training, you learn to adjust to difficult or painful events and not let them consume you while having to stay emotionally present for and compassionate towards your clients. Since I work with domestic abuse and intimate partner violence (IPV), it can be very challenging to see the incredible pain victims of IPV and their children can experience. Working on safety plans and keeping people safe can add a layer of a challenge since each person's situation is different and unique.

## **How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your past and current work? What is the most significant influence on your counseling practice?**

Gordon-Conwell has aided in my work environment on several levels. One of the most significant influences on my practice has been the ability to integrate faith into the counseling with my Christian clients. Integrating faith and seeing the Holy Spirit at work is immensely gratifying. It has also prepared me for PhD work, laying the foundation through academic excellence and establishing critical and evaluative thinking skills that now help me conduct research and advance the counseling profession.

## **How has God woven together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to where you are now?**

I had such an excellent education at Gordon-Conwell and learned much in my Practicum and Internship sites. Years ago these experiences made me want to become a professor for students getting their MA in Counseling. Starting the private group practice took much of my time, but the Lord has laid this desire on my heart these past few years.

I am a second-year Doctoral student at Regent University's Counselor Educator and Supervision Program. In August of 2021, I volunteered to supervise Ukrainian counselors-in-training with a professor of mine who founded the Ukraine Project. When the war broke out with Russia, we (the supervisors) had to adjust to provide the support that extended conventional supervisory relationships. What we witnessed as supervisors (seeing our supervisees under duress) is something I will never forget. Because of this experience, our team had to pivot to enhance best practices and increase cross-cultural and trauma supervisory competencies.



Additionally, we were establishing stabilization practices for the supervisees that were eventually passed on to their clients. Other areas we had to support were managing technology, having backup systems in place to communicate with the supervisees, and assessing the supervisee's readiness to return to counseling. Because of these experiences, a couple of members of my cohort and I are conducting a study that will help explore supervisory cross-cultural and trauma competencies in a war zone and the impact of vicarious trauma on supervisors. Lastly, I am a Teaching Assistant in the Masters of Counseling Department at Missio Seminary in Philadelphia this fall.

### **What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are beginning therapists?**

Do not be afraid to seek out help. Supervision and peer consultation should be an ongoing process in your career. We are continually growing and learning. Furthermore, walk humbly and be teachable. Own your mistakes and learn from them—this is how we grow. Finally, pray and rely on the Holy Spirit. He truly gives counselors wisdom when we need it or when we feel stuck.

### **Do you have publications or links to share?**

I am writing a couple of manuscripts with some of my cohort members focusing on supervisory competencies, IPV, and the narratives of perpetrators and victims of IPV in Christian faith-based families.

I also contributed to a presentation called “Domestic Violence Against Military Men: Prevention and Screening” as a research team member at the AMHCA conference in Las Vegas (American Mental Health Counselors Association). My research focused on Barriers to Therapeutic Care for Military Men.

I will also share my experiences this November at the NARACES Conference (North Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision) on the Cross-Cultural Ukraine Supervision: Putting best practices, ethics, and competencies into place during the war.

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