

The Counselor Wellness Cairn

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Indigenous people such as the Cherokee of the southern Appalachians or the Tarahumara of northern Mexico's canyon lands maintained the practice of marking important places, such as passes through mountainous terrain, with cairns created by hundreds of travelers adding one stone at a time over the course of many years (Frazier, 2001). The early 20th-century French poet and essayist, Antonin Artaud, was fascinated by the Tarahumaran practice of cairn building. According to Artaud (1988), in addition to providing a useful landmark, cairn building was a spiritual practice affirming the necessity of maintaining awareness of healthy and unhealthy forces. Without this fundamental awareness the Tarahumaran individual would lack physical, spiritual, and emotional vitality.

Because it commemorates the 10-year anniversary of the counselor impairment special issue, as well as heightens awareness of the factors promoting counselor wellness, the current special issue may be likened to a cairn. In 1996, the *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development* (now called the *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*), in coordination with the American Counseling Association (ACA) Task Force on Counselor Impairment, published a special issue titled "Professional Counselor Impairment and Renewal." The current special issue, titled "Toward a Culture of Counselor Wellness," is published in coordination with the ACA Task Force on Exemplary Practices for Counselor Wellness. As such, this issue also reflects a significant shift in the counseling profession's philosophy from an earlier focus on distress and impairment to a more recent focus on optimal health and wellness. Accordingly, the articles in this issue focus on proactive measures that counselors can take to promote wellness and prevent impairment. Moreover, this change in prevailing philosophy to an increased emphasis on wellness also illustrates how a body of knowledge can be compared to an organic life form. Like a cairn, a body of knowledge may cease to grow, or as in the case of cairns that are still growing, may continue to develop and thrive. Scholars who add to a body of knowledge feed a living cairn that often marks important breakthroughs, such as the recommended exemplary practices for preventing counselor impairment and promoting counselor wellness included in the pages of this issue. Accordingly, I wish to express my special thanks to Guest Coeditors Gerard Lawson and Elizabeth Venart, as well as to all of the contributing authors, for feeding the counselor wellness cairn. From the looks of this issue, it appears to be alive and thriving.

REFERENCES

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