

Natalie Fikac, Ed.D.

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www.wellnessfirstconsulting.org

Profile: A driven, dedicated and experienced professional school counselor, educator, and mental and behavioral health professional for over twenty-six years; competent and enthusiastic manager who is capable of coordinating duties in a leadership role. A leader in the area of counseling, relationship building and management of personnel. A district, state and national level consultant and speaker who has served on numerous committees at the local and state level focusing on the needs of our students in our changing educational world.

Education:

Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas Ed.D. Educational Leadership	2011-2013
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas M.Ed. Education – Counseling and Educational Administration	2006-2009
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas BA – Elementary Education, Minor –English and Reading	1993-1996
<i>Dare to Lead</i> ™ Certified Facilitator	June 2019
Stress Management and Resilience Training (SMART) Certified	January 2022
Mindful Self-Compassion Teacher	May 2023

Work Experience:

Angelo State University Adjunct Professor & Field Supervisor Department of Curriculum & Instruction School of School Counselors	2021-Present
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Liberty University
Adjunct Professor 2021-Present
Department of Community Care & Counseling
School of Behavioral Sciences

Lamar University
Adjunct Professor 2014-2019
Doctoral & Masters Level Educational Administration

Character Strong
Trainer and Presenter 2019-Present

Be Well, Lead Well LLC (DBA Wellness First Consulting)
Owner & Consultant 2019-Present

- Strategic Planning / Strategic Doing
- Leadership Development
 - Brené Brown's *Dare to Lead*™ Facilitator – CDTLF
 - *The Coach Approach* Trained
- Consultation
 - School District System Design Planning
 - Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems
 - Guidance & Counseling Department Development (Texas Model & ASCA Model)
 - Leadership Coaching & Consultation
- Stress Management and Resiliency Training (SMART) Certified
- Certified Mindful Self-Compassion Teacher

South-Southwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center
Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health
University of Texas Austin
School Mental Health Lead 2021-present

- Direct, lead, and provide consultation to South-Southwest MHTTC supporting Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana
- Coordinate and create School Mental Health resources, tools and guidance for Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana

Texas Education Agency
Highly Mobile and At Risk Division
Project AWARE State Coordinator 2019-2021

- Direct and lead Texas AWARE team (TIEMH, TEA, HHSC) in supporting ESCs and LEAs
- Direct, lead and provide consultation to Community Project Managers at ESC 3, 4, & 5 in creating Comprehensive Service Delivery Plans, training for staff in LEAs and coordinating mental and behavioral health services for students in LEAs

- Co-coordinate and co-create COVID Mental Health resources, tools and guidance for Texas LEAs
- Co-coordinate and co-create Texas School Mental Health Toolkit
- Co-coordinate and co-lead Mental Health Behavioral Health PLC trainings for 20 ESCs to build Texas capacity in Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems

**Mental Health America of Greater Houston
Director Center for School Behavioral Health**

2019

- Direct and lead the Center's team in driving systems change efforts in the area of school behavioral health using a collective impact approach
- Direct and lead the Center's Collaborative that is currently engaging over 100 organizational participants from various sectors including 24 public school districts, 3 charter school systems, behavioral health providers, and other child-serving organizations
- Co-responsible for the Center's advocacy efforts to promote the implementation of best practices in the area of children's mental health and school behavioral health
- Support and advocate on behalf of schools to meet mental and behavioral health needs at the state and local level
- Provide consultation to Bay County Schools in Bay County, Florida – Building An ASCA Aligned Guidance & Counseling Department – UNICEF Grant
- Provide consultation to Dickinson ISD in Dickinson, Texas – Building A Comprehensive Guidance & Counseling Department – Rebuild Texas Grant

Spring Branch ISD – Director Guidance & Counseling 2017-December 2018

- Direct and Coordinate Trainings and Professional Development for Professional School Counselors
- Coordinate Course Selection Handbook for Junior High and High Schools
- Direct and Coordinate CTE Training for JH and HS Professional School Counselors
- Direct and Coordinate and direct implementation of all requirements of House Bill 5 & House Bill 18
- Direct and Coordinate communications between Counseling Department, C&I, CTE, Advanced Academics, Special Programs & Technology
- Direct and Implement Crisis Team Model
- Direct and lead Social Emotional Learning D-SHAC Sub-Committee
- Direct and Coordinate Mental Health Parent Nights with Special Programs Department
- Direct Early College Programming and Dual Credit Partnership with HCC
- Create and Implement consistent Guidance Curriculum on Elementary, Middle School & High School campuses

- Direct and Implement monthly book study groups with Professional School Counselors
- Direct and Implement Counselor Advisory Committee
- Direct and Implement Data Collection of Counselors under the four components of a Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program
- Analyze Data collected and present to stakeholders/decision makers
- Create and Implement district wide Social-Emotional & College & Career Readiness curriculum and expectations

Pearland ISD – Coordinator of Guidance Services

2014-2017

- Coordinate Trainings and Professional Development for Campus Counselors
- Coordinate Course Selection Handbook for Junior High and High Schools
- Coordinate CTE Training for JH and HS Professional School Counselors
- Coordinate and direct implementation of all requirements of House Bill 5 & House Bill 18
- Coordinate communications between Counseling Department, C&I, CTE, Advanced Academics, Special Programs & Technology
- Coordinate and implement Crisis Team Model
- Coordinate Mental Health Parent Nights with Special Programs Department
- Implement Safe School Ambassadors for Junior Highs and High Schools
- Implement Mental Health Awareness for district and spearhead ASK? Training for district personnel
- Implement Naviance on Junior High and High School campuses as well as parent presentations at 'Parent Information Nights'
- Implement consistent Guidance Curriculum on Elementary, Middle School & Junior High campuses
- Implemented "Social Media Nights" for district
- Implement monthly book study groups with Counselors
- Implement district-wide streamlined and consistent program for course registration
- Implement Counselor Advisory Committee
- Implemented Data Collection of Counselors under the four components of a Comprehensive Guidance Program
- Analyze Data collected and present to stakeholders
- Implement district wide College & Career Readiness curriculum and expectations
- Implement Suicide Prevention Task Force and #iwillASK Event

ADMINISTRATIVE / COUNSELING EXPERIENCE:

Elementary Campus Administrator

Victoria Walker Elementary School – Goose Creek CISD

2013-2014

High School Counselor – 9th Grade

Ross S. Sterling High School – Goose Creek CISD

2012-2013

Elementary School Counselor

James Bowie Elementary | Alamo Elementary – Goose Creek CISD

2010-2011

Elementary School Counselor

Neal Elementary – Bryan ISD

2007-2009

Elementary School Counselor

Smithville Elementary – Smithville ISD

2006-2007

Reading | Dyslexia Specialist

Smithville Elementary – Smithville ISD

2004-2006

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

1996-2003

- Elementary School Teacher in Bastrop ISD at Mina Elementary
- Elementary School Teacher in Brazosport ISD at Bess Brannen Elementary
- Elementary School Teacher in Edna ISD at SFA Elementary
- Elementary School Teacher in Victoria ISD at Shields Magnet School
- Elementary School Teacher in Temple ISD at Cater Elementary

Awards / Recognition:

- Employee of the Month February 2004 - Smithville ISD – Recognized at School Board Meeting
- ‘Educator of the Year’ by Smithville ISD PALS 2006/2007 Smithville ISD - Recognized at School Board Meeting
- Employee of the Month March 2007- Smithville ISD - Recognized at School Board Meeting
- Member Chi Sigma Iota – National Counseling Honor Society 4.0 GPA
- Winner of a \$1500 grant by the Bryan Education Foundation for Character Building activity – December 2007
- Texas Counselors Association Committee –

- Graduate Students Involvement Committee – (GSIC)
- TCA Panel Member – November 2009
- Featured In Episode of Bryan Living & Learning for Character Education Program : <http://www.bryanisd.org/default.asp?pageID=204>
- Winner of \$1500 by the GCCISD Education Foundation “Courageous Conversations About Race” Group Counseling Curriculum – May 2012
- Winner of \$2000 by the GCCISD Education Foundation “Why Try? A Group Counseling Curriculum for At Risk Youth” – May 2013
- Winner of \$900 NACAC Innovation Grant – September 2015
- Professional School Counselor Academy of Texas Education Agency – selected to attend TEA Conferences 2016/2017
- CTAT Region 6 Winner – Career Guidance Award – December 2016
- #IAMSIBSD Awardee – September 2017
- Professional School Counselor Academy of Texas Education Agency – TEA Conferences 2017/2018
- Rebuild Texas Foundation Grant Awardee on behalf of Mental Health America of Greater Houston - \$1.2 million to provide coordination, training and direct consultation to build out a comprehensive mental and behavioral health program for early childhood centers in the community to high school level students
- UNICEF Grant Awardee on behalf of Mental Health America of Greater Houston - \$150,000 to provide training and direct consultation to build a guidance and counseling department in Bay County Schools, Florida
- SEL Leadership Consortium – Texas Representative

Scholarly Activity:

Recent Publications:

1-Minute Encouragers for School Staff. Youthlight Publishing. 2023

Administrative Leaders of School Counselors: Building on Theory, Standards, and Experiences for Optimal Programming. Rutledge Publishing. 2023

Responding to Critical Cases in School Counseling. October, 2020. Author and co-author of 2 chapters.

The Effects of Lunar Phases on Adolescent Student Behavior in a High School Setting. December, 2013. Dissertation.

Dear Play Therapy. Texas Association for Play Therapy:
Playbill. Winter 2009.

Campus Chatter: First Time Conference Attendee? Make It a Great One; Guidelines:
The Texas Counseling Association; Volume 57, Number 1; Fall 2009.

Recent Presentations:

TEPSA Presenter – “Take the Bully by the Horns”; presented with Dr. Ron Wyatt – June 2011

TEPSA Presenter – “45 Family Involvement Activities in 60 Minutes”;
presented with Jaime Shipley and Monica Juarez – June 2012

Junior High School Migrant Student Mini-Conference Presenter –
“Bullying...Everything You Need to Know” November 2012

CTE Presenter GCCISD – Guidance Counseling Module – “Using the CACE
Survey to Better Understand Your Students’ Future Goals” February 2013

TABE Presenter – “School Counselors and New Arrival Teachers
Coordinating Efforts for a Smooth Transition of Immigrant Students into
Texas Schools” November 2013.

TECCESS Conference – “Year Two of House Bill 5 – Where Are We Now?” –
April 2015

Truancy State Conference Presenter– “Meeting the Social and Emotional
Needs of Students to Help Prevent Dropout – A Counselor & an
Administrator’s Perspective” October 2015

State of Opportunity Radio Show – Michigan – “Do Students Really Act Up
During a Full Moon?” Radio Interview – October 2015
[http://stateofopportunity.michiganradio.org/post/do-students-act-
more-during-full-moon-sounds-crazy-lots-teachers-believe-it - October 2015](http://stateofopportunity.michiganradio.org/post/do-students-act-more-during-full-moon-sounds-crazy-lots-teachers-believe-it - October 2015)

Saint John’s Catholic Church – “Parenting in A Catholic Home” – November
2015

Saint John’s Catholic Church – “Discipline & Your Children” – April 2016

Technology Department Pearland ISD – “Discovering Your Values and Beliefs
to
Build a Better Department” May 2016

#iwillASK – “Suicide Prevention Event” September 2016

DFPS Partners in Prevention Annual Conference Presenter – “Coordinating with School District Personnel to Meet the Needs of Students and Families” – September 2016

#iwillASK Suicide Prevention Task Force Event – May 2017

<http://www.pearlandisd.org/Page/13662>

Parent U Presenter / Growing Leaders Presenter – “Finding Balance in an Unbalanced World” – September 2017 / October 2017 / December 2018

Parent U Presenter – “BREATHE – Strategies to Help You Help Your Kids Manage Stress” – March 2018

Mentor U Presenter - “BREATHE – Strategies to Help You Help Your Kids Manage Stress” – April 2018

Edgewood Elementary Staff Wellness Event – “Gratitude - Being Kind to Others Lowers Your Stress Level” – March 2018

Opportunity Culture Conference Texas Presenter – “BREATHE – Strategies to Lower Your Stress Level” – June 2018

American Assn. of Family & Consumer Sciences Leadership Council Workshop Presenter – Alexandria, Virginia, “You Can’t Pour from an Empty Cup – Leading with Intention & Purpose” – September 2018

Podcast Guest Speaker – Trish Miller, LPC, *Working on the Inside* – September 2018

Parent U Presenter – “Promoting Social Emotional & T24 Learning in SBISD” – September 2018 / October 2018

TEACH Annual Conference – Spring, Texas, “You Can’t Pour from an Empty Cup – Leading with Intention & Purpose” – January 2018

Mental Health America Annual National Conference – Washington DC – “Building Consensus, Creating Change: MHA of Greater Houston’s Approach to Complex Systemic Issues” – June 2019

Texas Network of Youth Services Annual Conference Presenter – Houston, Texas, “You Can’t Pour from an Empty Cup – Leading with Intention & Purpose” – June 2019

Podcast Guest Speaker – Character Strong – “The Importance of Tier 1 Supports for the Mental and Behavioral Health of Our Students” - July 2019

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – July 2019

Harris County Long Term Recovery Summit – Houston, Texas “Filling Students Emotional Backpack with a Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Program” – August 2019

Podcast Guest Speaker – UNICEF – “The Impact of Hurricane Harvey and How UNICEF and the Center for School Behavioral Health at MHA of Greater Houston Partnered to Support” – August 2019

Region 13 – The Great Eight Small & Rural School Board Mini-Conference Presentation – “Thinking Differently About Ways to Support the Mental and Behavioral Health Needs of Our Students - August 2019

HLTRC – Houston Long-Term Recovery Conference Presentation – “Filling Students Emotional Backpack with a Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Program” – August 2019

Texas Student Council Association Conference Panel Member – “Student Mental Health - Let’s Talk About What Matters Most” – September 2019

NBC News Learn & KPRC Panel Member - Education Now Houston – “Impact After the Storm” – September 2019

Pearson Virtual Counselor Professional Development – “What is SEL & How Can We Teach SEL in a Virtual Setting?” – October 2019

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – Pearland ISD – October 2019

Dare to Lead™ Mini~Retreat – Fort Worth ISD – January 2020

“You Can’t Pour From an Empty Cup, Professional School Counselors Leading with Intention & Purpose”– Killeen ISD - February 2020

“Building a Toolkit to Meet the Mental & Behavioral Health Needs of Students in Texas” – Texas School Counselor’s Conference – February 2020

“How Can the TEA Help Professional School Counselors Meet the Needs of Their Students?” – Texas School Counselor’s Conference – February 2020

Dare to Lead™ – “How Being a Professional School Counselor & Daring Leadership Align” – Region 13 Counselor Retreat - June 2020

“Leading with Intention & Purpose” – Texas ESC Counselor Specialists Workshop – June 2020

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – August 2020

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – ESC 11 – September 2020

“Women In Leadership - Daring Leadership” – Texas Christian University Alumni September 2020

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – October 2020

Dare to Lead™ Principal’s Summit– ESC 8 – November 2020

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – ESC 11 – December 2020

“Leading and Leaning In With Intention and Purpose” Keynote – New Caney ISD – January 2021

Dare to Lead™ Keynote – Texas School Counselor’s Association - February 2021

“The Resiliency Journey” Webinar - American School Counseling Association Training – February 2021

Texas Woman’s University *Dare to Lead*™ Keynote – March 2021

Communities In Schools “Two-Day Leadership Retreat” – April 2021

“Daring to Lead With Intention and Purpose” Keynote – New Caney ISD – May 2021

Dare to Lead™ Professional School Counselor’s Summit– ESC 13 – June 2021

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – Goose Creek CISD - June 2021

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – ESC 11 - June 2021

“Healing-Centered Practices to Support the School Community” – Channelview ISD - June 2021

“Building a Toolkit to Support School Mental Health” – ESC 3 - July 2021

“Living Into Our Values for the 2021/2022 School Year” – New Caney ISD - August 2021

“Building a Toolkit to Support School Mental Health” Keynote – DeWitt & Lavaca County Special Education Coop - August 2021

“Self-Compassion, Empathy & Belonging” Keynote – Grace School – August 2021

“Daring Leadership While Supporting School Mental Health Needs”
Advancing Behavioral Health Collaboration Summit Keynote – Texas
Education Agency – September 2021

“Deep Dive School Mental Health” Session Facilitator – American
Psychological Association Conference – October 2021

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – ESC 10 - October 2021

“Daring to Lead with Intention & Purpose” – Pasadena ISD - October 2021

“Daring to Lead with Intention and Purpose” – Lone Star School Counselor
Association Conference – November 2021

“Social & Emotional Learning Competencies – Tier One Supports” – ESC 3
Superintendent’s Roundtable – December 2021

“Self-Compassion, Empathy & Belonging” Keynote – Refugio ISD – January
2021

“Self-Compassion, Empathy & Belonging” Training – Port Aransas ISD –
January 2021

“Self-Compassion, Empathy & Belonging” Training – Family Consumer
Science’s Teacher Association of Texas Mid-Winter Conference – January
2021

“Social & Emotional Learning Competencies – Tier One Supports” – ESC 16
Superintendent’s Roundtable – February 2022

“Daring to Lead While Practicing Self-Care & Self-Compassion” The Recharge
Conference for Helpers - Sedona, Arizona – February 2022

“How Being a Professional School Counselor & Daring Leadership Align” –
Region 16 Counselor Retreat – February 2022

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – Dickinson ISD – March 2022

“Empathy & Self-Compassion for Educators” – New Caney ISD – March 2022

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – Lamar Consolidated ISD –April 2022

“Professional School Counselor’s New Counselor Institute” – ESC 13 – June 2022

“Living Into Our Values for the 2022/2023 School Year” – Needville ISD – June 2022

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – South Southwest MHTTC - June 2022

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – ESC 11 Special Education Directors - June 2022

“Personal Development Precedes Professional Development” – ESC 4 Resiliency Conference – June 2022

“How Being a School Nurse & Daring Leadership Align” – Region 4 School Nurse Retreat - July 2022

“Building a Mental Health Toolkit to Support Student, Staff and School Community Wellness” – ESC 3 Safe and Supportive School Conference – July 2022

“Daring to Lead with Intentionality and Purpose” – New Caney ISD – Tavola ES – August 2022

“Personal Development Precedes Professional Development” – Goose Creek CISD – August 2022

“Stress Management and Resiliency Training for Educators” – Goose Creek CISD – August 2022

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat – Lamar Consolidated ISD Professional School Counselors – August 2022

“You Can’t Pour From an Empty Cup – Leading with Intentionality and Purpose” – Bentonville ISD – Arkansas – August 2022

“Building a Mental Health Toolkit to Support Student, Staff and School Community Wellness” – Slidell ISD – August 2022

“Daring to Lead with Intentionality and Purpose” Keynote - Cisco ISD – August 2022

Dare to Lead™ Training Mini-Retreat –Barber’s Hill ISD Professional School Counselors – September 2022

“Daring to Lead with Intentionality and Purpose” - ESC 12 Leadership Conference – November 2022

“Professional School Counselor Daring to Lead with Intentionality and Purpose” - Cedar Hill ISD – January 2023

“You Can’t Pour From an Empty Cup – Leading with Intentionality and Purpose” – Bentonville ISD – Arkansas – January 2023

“Self-Compassion, the Key to Pursuing Your Purpose as a Professional School Counselor”- Texas School Counselor Conference – February 2023

“Daring to Lead with Intentionality While Practicing Self-Compassion” – Lake Travis ISD – February 2023

Dare to Lead™ Mini-Retreat –Azel ISD, Krum ISD, Springtown ISD Professional School Counselors – March 2023 – June 2023

“What Does Mental Health Mean for Our Youth?” Keynote – Humble ISD – Community Mental Health Event – May 2023

“Ways to Support the Mental Health of our Youth” Session – Humble ISD – May 2023

“Self-Compassion, the Key to Pursuing Your Purpose as a Professional School Counselor” - Uplift Education Counselor Retreat – June 2023

“Personal Development Precedes Professional Development” Keynote – ESC 8 Principal and Professional School Counselor Summit – June 2023

“Self-Compassion, the Key to Pursuing Your Purpose as a Professional School Counselor”- ESC 8 - Principal and Professional School Counselor Summit – June 2023

“Daring to Lead with Intentionality While Practicing Self-Compassion” – Barbers Hill ISD – June 2023

“Reflect, Connect, Restore Retreat ” – Goose Creek CISD Mental Health Department Retreat – June 2023

“Personal Development Precedes Professional Development” Workshop – Dripping Springs ISD Professional School Counselors – July 2023

“Self-Compassion, the Key to Pursuing Your Purpose as a Professional Educator” – Lamar Consolidated ISD – July 2023

“Self-Compassion, the Key to Pursuing Your Purpose as a Professional School Counselor” - ESC 15 Professional School Counselor Retreat – July 2023

“Reflect, Connect, Restore Retreat ” – ESC Leadership Retreat – August 2023

“Personal Development Precedes Professional Development – Leading with Compassion” – Keynote ESC 18 – Professional School Counselor Conference – September 2023

Upcoming Events:

“Daring Leadership – Connecting the Professional School Counselor with Campus Administration” Keynote ESC 12 – Leadership Conference – November 2023

“Self-Compassion and Daring Leadership, the Key to Pursuing Your Purpose” ESC 13 School Mental Health Leadership Conference – November 2023

“Self-Compassion and Daring Leadership, the Key to Pursuing Your Purpose” - Texas A&M University Financial Division Conference – March 2024

Research Interests:

- Professional School Counselor Identity
 - Educator Identity
 - Leadership Development
 - Character Education
 - Social & Emotional Competencies
 - Educational Reform
 - Transformational & Servant Leadership
 - At-Risk Students & Special Populations
 - Mental Health & Behavioral Health
 - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
 - Wellness ~ Spiritual, Physical, Mental & Emotional Harmony
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Community Involvement:

- CCE Parent Educator – Saint John’s Catholic Church, Baytown, Texas
- CCE Teacher and RCIA Sponsor – Saint John’s Catholic Church; Baytown, Texas
- Children’s Liturgy Leader/Teacher- Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church College Station, Texas
- Eucharistic Minister – Saint John the Apostle Catholic Church – Baytown, Texas
- BACODA Suicide Symposium Conference Committee Member – November 2015
- #iwill ASK – Suicide Prevention Task Force Event Committee Chair Member – 2016
- Menninger Grant Subcommittee – Houston, Texas 2019
- Children At-Risk Committee – Houston, Texas 2019
- ACTS Retreat Team – Saint Faustina Catholic Church, Fulshear, Texas - May 2019 – March 2020