

IDEOLOGY AND DECISION MAKING IN SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELING

by

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty  
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## Abstract

## IDEOLOGY AND DECISION MAKING IN SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELING

by

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The present study built on the design and results from the pilot study in an attempt to explore the relationship between psychologists' personal ideologies and the decisions they make in school-based counseling. Of particular interest was whether higher levels of self-reported ideology were related to support of relevant school policies. Participants included 166 psychologists who responded to an online survey that included questions related to personal and professional ideologies, attitudes toward school policies, training and preparedness in four areas of interest, and hypothetical scenarios. Consistency among responses in areas including theoretical orientation, political party, and training and preparedness in ethics and multicultural issues limited the analyses that could be performed to compare different populations. Correlation data indicated that there was no relationship between those who reported to be religious and those who reported that they were not religious, though slight differences were noted qualitatively. There was also no difference between responses of individuals who had not taken a class but felt prepared as compared with responses of the rest of the population. Correlation data also indicated some associations between the school policies related to liberal/conservative political views and the vignette designed toward that ideology.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

The American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) require that psychologists respect all aspects of clients' differences, including culture, individual, and role differences (APA, 2002). They also require psychologists to be aware of their own spiritual, religious, or nonreligious beliefs and biases, and to ensure that they do not take precedence over the best practice approach or scientific research results. Both APA and NASP advocate that psychologists work to prevent discrimination against and promote positive development of all individuals. APA addresses all aspects of diversity in its *Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct* (2002), stating that psychologists are required to ensure that they receive appropriate training to work with clients from diverse backgrounds (O'Connor & Vandenberg, 2005), and psychologists need to respect those differences in both research and clinical practice (Yarhouse & Fisher, 2002).

My pilot study stemmed from considering professional practice requirements and guidelines, and finding that research has shown that psychologists regularly work with individuals who have religious beliefs (Yarhouse & Fisher, 2002). So, for my pilot study, I attempted to ascertain if being employed as school psychologists by a religious institution affected psychologists' professional approach to their work with students. The scenarios I presented concerned a student who was struggling with his homosexuality, because it is an issue upon which APA and NASP and some religious organizations have taken strong opposing views. My results provided insight into how school psychologists might respond to an issue at odds with their religious beliefs. Many participants avoided taking a direct stance, stating that their concerns stemmed from bullying or discrimination that could occur if a student would choose to

come out as a homosexual. While these responses may have been provided in earnest, other research has shown that religious individuals self-deceive in order to protect themselves against threats to their views and self-image (Leak & Fish, 1989). Thus, the issue of self-deception and motivated reasoning in school-based counseling arose.

Self-deception emerges when an individual seeks to avoid the uncertainty that emerges from his inability to explain or understand his own behavior (Gazzaniga, 1997 as cited in vonHippel & Trivers, 2011). Rationalization plays a key role in self-deception (von Hippel & Trivers, 2011). When one rationalizes or reconstructs the motive behind behavior, he is able to avoid telling himself the whole truth about his actions by ensuring that the actions remain socially acceptable. Self-deception can even cause people who are supposedly ethical to act in an unethical manner (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). This relates to individuals who belong to organized ideologies, such a religious group or political party, because they are often very aware of the impression they leave on other people. In fact, those individuals may be more likely to attempt to appear tolerant and prejudice-free (Burriss & Navara, 2002).

Motivated reasoning plays a role in self-deception as people are simply likely to reach conclusions they are motivated to make. People utilize self-schemas to process information; because those self-schemas selectively process information, they allow people to collect information and support for their previously decided upon conclusion (Aronson & Reilly, 2006). When people are defense-minded, their goal is to maintain the attitudes they currently hold. Research has shown that defense-minded individuals make decisions based on their preferences rather than making objective decisions or basing their judgments on outcomes (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005). These findings have significance for the work of psychologists because if psychologists are presented with a situation that they feel threatens their personal ideology, they

may make therapeutic decisions from a defense-motivated perspective rather than from an accuracy-based perspective.

According to the pilot results (Brenner, 2011), it appeared as if religious participants may find ways to rationalize their unwillingness to work with the homosexual student. To analyze whether self-deception played a role in their decision, the pilot study was expanded for this dissertation. Research has shown that becoming a part of a social community is a primary reason people belong to an organized religion (Graham & Haidt, 2002). This definition makes it possible to expand the scope of a study of religious individuals to those who ascribe to other forms of ideology, because ideology can be the means by which individuals communicate and justify their beliefs (Schull, 1992). The dissertation study was an attempt to ascertain if higher levels of self-reported ideology are related to higher levels of professional self-deception among psychologists. Participants were asked to complete surveys that include questions related to demographic information, training courses they have taken, and ideology. Participants were also presented with five vignettes; one was a neutral vignette while the remaining four attempted to elicit a defense-minded response to decision making for people of various ideologies. The research was designed with the following hypotheses in mind:

HO1: A significant number of participants who self-identify as having an ideology will respond to school policy questions in a manner consistent with their reported ideology.

HO2: A significant number of participants will report that they feel at least “moderately prepared” to address issues related to ideology, but concurrently report that they have not taken a class and/or workshop related to ideological issues.

HO3: Of the participants who self-identify as having a particular ideology, a significant number will opt out of working with clients who present with seemingly polar ideologies.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature related to religions and ideology, and how ideologies can affect a psychologist's approach to counseling. The chapter will discuss some aspects that can affect decision making in counseling, such as APA and NASP ethical codes and guidelines, reasons individuals choose to partake in organized ideologies, self-deception and its prevalence among those who belong to organized ideologies, and motivated reasoning and its affect on decision making.

### Ethical Codes and Standards

**American Psychological Association (APA).** The American Psychological Association (APA) requires that its members read and understand their Ethics Code. The Code consists of five principles, which are aspirational in nature, as well as enforceable standards of behavior (APA, 2002). A number of principles and standards directly relate to psychologists' interactions with and biases against people of various ideologies and backgrounds, namely, justice, respect, and human relations.

Justice is the fourth principle listed in the Ethics Code. According to APA, the principle of justice affords all individuals access to psychology and its benefits. The principle cautions psychologists to be aware of their biases and their areas of competence, as well as their limitations, to ensure that they do not result in inequitable practices (APA, 2002). The principle directly relates to ideological psychologists, because biases can emerge from any ideology, and psychologists must remain vigilant in ensuring that those biases do not extend to their professional environment.

The fifth principle listed, respect for people's rights and dignity, reminds psychologists that there are individuals who are not necessarily able to make autonomous decisions, and that those individuals require special safeguards to protect them and their rights. This principle directly relates to school psychologists because working in schools places them in direct contact with minors who fall into the category of a vulnerable population. The principle also states that, psychologists are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status and consider these factors when working with members of such groups. (APA, 2002, p. 1063), and repeats the requirement that psychologists be aware of their biases and the work practices that may emerge from them. Although these principles are not enforceable, "their intent is to guide and inspire psychologists toward the very highest ethical ideals of the profession" (APA, 2002, p. 1062)

Among the enforceable standards in APA's ethics code is Standard 3, human relations, which delineates the restrictions and precautions psychologists must be aware of when interacting with clients and other professionals. Of the 12 areas listed under Standard 3, unfair discrimination (Standard 3.01) and other harassment (Standard 3.03) directly warn psychologists about discriminative work-related practices related to ideology, and specifically caution them against participating in harassing or demeaning behavior. Both standards list the variety of factors (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion) against which psychologists must be certain not to discriminate. These are extremely important for practicing school psychologists, as working in schools puts them in contact with individuals who differ on some of these key variables.

**National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).** The National Association for School Psychologists (NASP) also publishes standards for professional behavior. Its Principles for Professional Ethics (NASP, 2010) is designed to make school psychologists aware of their conduct in professional environments and to monitor their own professional behavior in an effort to protect those who receive services from school psychologists. Fairness and justice (Principle I.3) requires school psychologists to ensure that schools support and welcome all individuals “regardless of actual or perceived characteristics, including race, ethnicity, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, socioeconomic status, primary language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, or any other distinguishing characteristic” (NASP, 2010, p. 5-6). In addition to not discriminating against others or condoning discriminatory practices (I.3.1), school psychologists must educate themselves on ways in which diversity affects children’s development, their learning, and their behavior (I.3.2). Competence is also addressed in NASP standards. Not only must school psychologists ensure that they are qualified to provide services, they must also ensure that they do not partake in activities in which their personal issues interfere with their ability to work professionally, and they are required to seek assistance when those issues impede their professional effectiveness (NASP, 2010).

### **Guidelines of the American Psychological Association**

In addition to the ethics code, APA also publishes guidelines that apply to various people and practices. Those that apply to this dissertation address the issues of culture, homosexuality, and religion.

**Culture.** The APA Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services to Ethnic, Linguistic, and Culturally Diverse Populations (APA, 1990) were originally published to ensure

that psychologists were cognizant of the specific needs associated with individuals from ethnically diverse backgrounds. The guidelines define “ethnically diverse” as including, but not limited to, refugees and immigrants from outside the United States, as well as established subcultures, “such as Amish, Hasidic Jews, and rural Appalachian people” (APA, 1993, p. 45). The guidelines inform psychologists that they should acknowledge the role that culture and ethnicity play in regard to people’s behavior, and, in addition to recognizing the impact of culture and ethnicity on others, they also need to be aware of their own ethnicity and culture and how they play a role in their attitudes, biases, and values. Psychologists must correct their own prejudices and biases, and seek training when necessary in order to be considered competent to work with those of other cultures. Cultural beliefs and community values must also be taken into account when making differential diagnoses decisions. The guidelines express the need for psychologists to respect the religious and spiritual beliefs of their clients, as they affect the client’s perspective, expression of distress, and overall world view. In fact, according to the guidelines, consultation with appropriate religious or spiritual leaders may assist psychological intervention.

**Homosexuality.** The APA has also taken a firm stance in support of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. Since the 1970s, when APA stated that homosexuality is no longer considered a disorder, it has attempted to minimize the stigma associated with homosexuality as well as reject viewpoints that pathologize homosexuality. APA’s Resolution on Appropriate Affirmative Responses to Sexual Orientation Distress and Change Efforts (APA, 2009) clearly states that APA does not support sexual orientation change efforts due to lack of empirical evidence regarding their efficacy, and cautions therapists against misrepresenting the effectiveness of those programs. The resolution mentions religion as one of the factors that may

play a role in stigmatization of homosexuality, but does not delineate ways in which therapists can reconcile their sexuality with their religion. APA also has 21 Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients (APA, 2012). One guideline specifies that psychologists consider the religion and spirituality of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. The guideline details the importance of understanding clients' religion and the rejection they may have felt from their religion as a result of their sexual orientation.

**Religion.** APA addresses all aspects of diversity in its Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct. It states that psychologists are required to ensure that they receive appropriate training to work with clients from diverse backgrounds, including those belonging to various religious groups (O'Connor & Vandenberg, 2005), and psychologists need to respect those differences in both research and clinical practice (Yarhouse & Fisher, 2002).

The APA, in its multicultural guidelines, articulates that psychologists are required to be agents of social justice to intervene against oppressive forces (APA, 2003). The guidelines encourage psychologists to ensure that injustices do not take place within the confines of their office, and to intervene if conflicts arise in the sociopolitical arena (Bartoli & Gillem, 2008). They also state that psychologists must respect all aspects of a religious client's spiritual and religious observances and beliefs (Aten & Hernandez, 2004). APA's Resolution on Religious, Religion-based, and/or Religion-Derived Prejudice (Anton, 2008) states the importance of psychologists' awareness of their own spiritual, religious, or nonreligious beliefs and biases, and requires them to ensure that these beliefs do not take precedence over the best practice approach or scientific research results.

Psychology as a whole has been moving toward a more accepting view of religion. While the DSM-III-R faced criticism for linking pathology and religiosity in a seemingly arbitrary

manner (O'Connor & Vandenberg, 2005), the DSM-IV-TR contains a section for "Additional Conditions That May Be a Focus of Clinical Attention" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 739) that includes a subcategory of "Religious or Spiritual Problems" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 741). This subcategory distinguishes religious behavior from pathology. Other examples of a more accepting view toward religion include an increase in the number of religion and psychology oriented books and literature published by the APA (Aten & Hernandez, 2004).

One of the current issues in integrating religion and psychology and in addressing religion in psychotherapy is the lack of formal training that psychologists receive in school (Russell & Yarhouse, 2006; Yarhouse & Fisher, 2002). One study shows that only 13% of APA-accredited programs offer a specific course relating to spirituality and religion, but that course is not offered every semester, or even every year (Brawer, Handal, Fabricatore, Roberts, & Wajda-Johnson, 2002). McMinn et al. (2009) found that very few psychologists (less than 15%) believed that they had received much training regarding psychology and religion. While the APA encourages diversity in accredited programs (Brawer et al., 2002) as well as an understanding of diversity among its members (APA, 2003), there is a dearth of formal information available to pursue religious issues. This is an ethical consideration in light of the APA's and NASP's aforementioned views on psychologists' competence.

## **Religion**

The majority of the United States population utilizes some aspects of religion. Gallup polls in 2000 indicated that 6% of individuals reported having no religious preference (Russell & Yarhouse, 2006), while in 1996, 90% stated a belief in God (Yarhouse & Fisher, 2002). Two-thirds of Americans reportedly attended services on a monthly basis and belonged to a

synagogue or church. This number has been stable since the mid-1960s (Yarhouse & Fisher, 2002). When researchers examined psychologists as a group, however, they found lower rates of religious involvement than in the general population. While 90% of the general population believes in God (Yarhouse & Fisher, 2002), only 72% of psychologists feel the same way (Shafranske, 2000). Eleven percent of the general population stated that religion was not important to them, while 51% of psychologists felt the same way (Yarhouse & Fisher, 2002).

There is much research that attempts to understand why people choose to be a part of organized religion. Most of the research focuses on individual processes, rather than group processes. Religious beliefs have been described as being cognitive errors (Bering, 2002), such as believing in life after death due to our inability to consider ourselves as nonexistent, as enhancements to self-esteem (Sedikides & Gebauer, 2010), and as an attachment theory with God as the attachment figure (Granqvist, Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2010).

Graham and Haidt (2010) suggest examining religion as a social interaction that creates an in-group. They use their theory of moral foundations, which states that there are five universal and innate psychological systems that construct everyone's morality, and that religions share three of those five foundations, namely ingroup/loyalty toward others of the same religion, purity/sanctity that relates to the rules and regulations religion places upon its followers, and authority/respect toward traditions, authority figures, and deities. According to Graham and Haidt (2002), people belong to religions because they become part of a social community. They also use the social aspects of religion to explain why research has found that religious people are happier and why they give more to charity. In fact, they posit that the religious beliefs are less important than the social aspects of religion. This is supported by Diener and Seligman's (2002)

finding that happiness is fundamental in social relationships, and when controlling for the social relationships, religiosity does not assist in predicting well-being.

**Religion as ideology.** Graham and Haidt's (2002) description of religion as a social community makes it possible to expand the scope of religious studies to extend to groups that encourage an in-group mentality. Ideology can be viewed as a belief system or as a form of discourse (Schull, 1992). While not all members may share the exact same beliefs, ideology can be the means by which individuals communicate and justify their beliefs. The term "ideology" is often used to describe a system of ideas for a particular group or class. It can relate to culture, politics, or religion (Williams, 1996). For the purposes of this paper, and the study described herein, this definition of ideology will be utilized. The discussion of self-deception and motivated reasoning that follows applies to those who belong to any particular group and who use ideology to communicate and justify their beliefs.

### **Self-Deception**

Self-deception is interesting in that the deceiver and the deceived are the same person. According to Triandis (2009, as cited in Triandis, 2011), self-deception emerges because we "construct" the world through the lens of our hopes, needs, and desires. There are a few varieties of self-deception (von Hippel & Trivers, 2011). Some involve errors in information processing, while others require the individual to convince herself that what is false is actually true. Insight into self-deception can be gleaned by examining patients whose corpus callosums had been severed. Patients were shown a chicken foot in their left hemisphere and a snowy landscape in their right hemisphere. When asked to choose a corresponding picture, their left hands pointed to a shovel while their right hands pointed to a chicken head. When asked to explain why they were pointing to a shovel, the patients could not answer truthfully because their right hemisphere

could not verbally explain itself. Patients responded that they would use the shovel to clean the waste generated by the chicken (Gazzaniga, 1997 as cited in vonHippel & Trivers, 2011). The conclusion is that self-deception emerges when an individual seeks to avoid the uncertainty that comes from his inability to explain or understand his own behavior.

Other forms of self-deception are independent of neurological brain function. Individuals will conduct biased information searches to ensure that they do not encounter information that contradicts their choices or beliefs. Some examples provided by von Hippel and Trivers (2011) include individuals who avoid going to the doctor so that they do not receive bad news, who choose to avoid conversations that will provide information they would rather not be true, and who search for welcome, rather than unwelcome, information. This explains why people stop researching alternative products once they have made their product choice, why smokers avoid conversations about the negative effects of smoking, and why individuals choose newspapers and magazines that share their political orientation. Individuals also tend to interpret information in a way that allows their original beliefs or opinions to remain intact or be strengthened. They also forget or misremember information that is inconsistent with their preferences.

Rationalization plays a key role in self-deception (von Hippel & Trivers, 2011). When one rationalizes or reconstructs the motive behind behavior, he is able to avoid telling himself the whole truth about his actions by ensuring that the actions remain socially acceptable. Synder et al. (1979, as cited in Von Hippel & Trivers, 2011), conducted research on the avoidance of disabled people. He placed a disabled person in a seat near a television. There was another television in the room and available seating next to each television. When the same program was shown on both televisions, participants who were told to choose a seat always sat near the disabled person. However, when the televisions were showing two different programs, most participants chose a

seat away from the disabled individual and near the second television. If participants were able to rationalize their behavior as stemming from external factors, such as the television program they chose to view, they would avoid the disabled person. This behavior allowed them to maintain socially acceptable behavior.

From a moral standpoint, those who deceive should be held accountable for their actions, however, a self-deceiver cannot be held responsible as it is impossible for someone to knowingly lie to himself (Levy, 2004). It is impossible for humans to process all of the information they are presented with on a daily basis (Triandis, 2011). In fact, we can only process about seven items of information at a time (Miller, 1956 as cited in Triandis, 2011). This limitation forces us to focus on smaller bits of information, and it is more likely that people will sample pleasant information that is consistent with their hopes, needs, and desires, rather than focus on unpleasant information.

Tenbrunsel and Messick (2004) provide a framework that describes how self-deception can even cause people who are supposedly ethical to act in an unethical manner. Through the use of self-deception an individual can cause the ethical characteristics of a situation to recede, so that she can act in ways that support her self-interest while still maintaining her moral values. This occurs through the use of four enabling tools (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). The first tool is the use of language euphemisms, which are stories that individuals tell themselves about their actions that remove all ethical implications from what they are doing. An example given by the authors is using the term “right-sizing” rather than the term “layoffs”, as it places attention on the economic advantage of saving money for the business, rather than facing the reality of the economic hardship people will encounter when they lose their job. By editing the description of a

behavior, the behavior then becomes socially acceptable, and the individual no longer needs to face the complexities involved in ethical decision making.

The second enabler is the slippery slope of decision making, which consists of two separate processes (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). The first relates to the detachment that repeated exposure brings. While something might appear shocking the first time it is seen or heard, after experiencing this occurrence numerous times, the effect wears off. The more one is exposed to an ethical dilemma, the less likely one is to consider the ethical aspects of it, which may lead to less self-reflection and more unethical behavior (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). The second element of the slippery slope involves the induction mechanism; this mechanism uses past behavior as a point of reference in judging new behavior. If past behavior is considered ethical, and the new behavior is just slightly different, then the new behavior is considered acceptable. If each step away from ethical behavior is small, then eventually people may become involved in wholly unethical behavior (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004).

Errors in perceptual causation are the third enabler to self-deception, and they occur because of the complexity of determining causation in situations, and because humans are imperfect (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). Individuals often misconstrue judgments about moral responsibility in order to distance themselves from ethical situations. This occurs through the use of three factors. First, instead of looking at ethical issues as a systems concern, the issue is viewed as an individual concern, which results in overlooking the environmental causes of unethical behavior. Second, individuals have self-interested motives when assigning blame, so they often see other factors as more variable than they really are in order to shift blame off of themselves. Third, individuals detach themselves from moral circumstances through acts of omission. An example given by the authors is that of an individual selling a used car. Is it the

responsibility of the seller to inform the buyer of all negative aspects of the car, or does the onus lie with the buyer? Acts of omission allows individual to shift blame from themselves to others by blurring the assignment of responsibility. Removing themselves from the moral circumstances increases the likelihood that they will repeat this type of unethical behavior (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004).

The final factor to consider in self-deception is that it is impossible to have a truly objective view of the world. All individuals experience the world through their own lens, thereby making social surroundings different for each person. In order for someone to understand the effect his actions have on others, which is considered a requirement in ethical theory, he must essentially try to imagine the world from someone else's perspective; however, this imagining takes place from his own perspective. While this factor is more logical than empirical, it is an important one to remember when understanding the causes of self-deception (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004).

**Self-deception related to religion and culture.** Self-deception is affected by culture. People from collectivist cultures believe that their in-group is superior, while people from individualist cultures simply believe that they themselves are superior. Gilovich (1991, as cited in Triandis, 2011), conducted a survey of one million American high school seniors. He found that 100% felt they had above average ability to get along with others, and 70% considered their leadership abilities to be above average relative to other high school students, while 2% considered their leadership abilities to be below average.

Triandis (2011) explains four important characteristics that can be used to distinguish cultures from one another. The first is whether a culture is simple or complex. This is the distinction between hunters and gatherers, and information societies such as the Romans or the

Egyptians. The second characteristic is whether the culture is tight or loose, that is, whether it consists of many rules with punishments for deviation, or whether there are few rules and deviation is permitted. The third characteristic relates to collectivist societies, in which the self is part of a collective, or individualistic societies, in which the self is independent of in-groups. The final characteristic is whether the culture is vertical and hierarchical or horizontal and egalitarian. Triandis explains that these dimensions vary across cultures, and that there is overlap. For example, a college institution is a culture that is individualistic and vertical. Self-deception is most likely to occur when an individual comes from a simple, tight, and/or vertical culture, as compared to complex, loose, and/or horizontal cultures. When a culture consists of beliefs that are extremely important to the individuals, the individuals are more likely to self-deceive.

People who belong to a particular religion or ideology are often very aware of the impression they leave on other people. In fact, those individuals may be more likely to attempt to appear tolerant and prejudice-free (Burriss & Navara, 2002). There has been disagreement regarding intrinsically religious people's high scores on social desirability scales. While some researchers (Batson, Naifeh, & Pate, 1978; Richards, 1994) found that religious individuals act in ways that are socially desirable as a form of self-protection, others (Watson, Morris, Foster, & Hood, 1986) found that religious individuals' high scores on those scales were simply a reflection of their possibly elevated level of moral conscientiousness.

Burriss and Navara (2002) attempted to determine whether religious individuals were "faking good" or if their true feelings and actions penalize them on measures of social desirability by creating a threatening situation that could trigger a self-protection response of social desirability. Participants completed a religious questionnaire, as well as Paulhus's Balanced Inventory of Desirability Responses (BIDR), which is designed to measure both

impression management and self-deception. Individuals were then brought into the lab, told to imagine themselves before an audience, and told to rate that audience as friendly or hostile. Participants were then asked to describe a positive or negative experience in which they felt responsible for what had happened, and to recreate the emotions that they had felt. Upon completion, participants rated the extent to which they felt particular emotions, and completed the BIDR for a second time. Results indicated that individuals with higher levels of intrinsically motivated religion were likely to increase their self-deception as a form of self-protection after being in the “negative experience” group. The particular fluctuations in the BIDR scores did not support the possibility that religious people simply have higher moral codes and therefore score higher on measures of social desirability.

### **Motivated Reasoning**

Motivated reasoning is an area of study related to self-deception. Motivated reasoning occurs when an individual’s reasoning process is biased by her desire to maintain her previous beliefs (Keller & Block, 1999). It is generally studied in relation to cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance theory purports that if a person acts in a manner that is inconsistent with his privately held opinions, he will attempt to change the opinion in order to align it with his behavior (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). Further research in this area has found that in order to truly cause lasting attitude change, the individual needs to have participated in the behavior out of his own free will. This willingness to engage in behavior that is inconsistent with the individual’s personal beliefs or opinions results in a level of arousal that then requires attitude change in order to re-boost the individual’s self-esteem (Kunda, 1990). Individuals, however, must be motivated to reach the conclusions they reach. For example, when individuals were told that a particular character trait was necessary for success, they were more likely to describe

themselves as having that trait because they were motivated to view themselves as potentially successful people (Kunda, 1990).

While individuals may strive to remain objective and unbiased in their decision making, the very act of attempting to objectively justify decisions made is biased by their motives (Kunda & Sinclair, 1999). People are simply likely to reach conclusions they are motivated to make. People utilize self-schemas to process information; because those self-schemas selectively process information, they allow people to collect information and support for their previously decided upon conclusion (Aronson & Reilly, 2006). Processing information is guided by three distinct goals, namely, accuracy goals, defense goals, and impression goals (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005). To meet the accuracy goal, the individual scrutinizes information to determine its validity; the defense goal is to maintain the attitudes the individual currently holds; and the impression goal is to meet interpersonal and social requirements by expressing attitudes that are considered appropriate by others (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005).

Agrawal and Maheswaran (2005) conducted studies that examined the outcome biases that emerged through the three motivational contexts. An outcome bias effect is when people make judgments that are consistent with performance outcomes, rather than based on the actual performance. This occurs even when the performance is arbitrary. Agrawal and Maheswaran (2005) conducted three studies. In the first, some participants were to imagine being a reporter, which triggers the accuracy goal, while other were told to imagine they were out to lunch with someone who might invite them to a job interview, which triggers the impression goal. All participants then read an article rating a particular product as a 7 on a scale of 1 to 10, and then describing the product as either positive or negative. Results indicated that accuracy motives allowed individuals to protect themselves from outcome bias, and they made their own

conclusions as to whether or not they agreed that the product was superior or inferior based on the rating given. Impression-minded people tended to agree with the outcome. The results were the same in the second study, when impression minded people were told they would be called in to explain their reasoning. In the third study, participants were first given favorable information about a certain new product relative to a product currently on the market in order to create preference for a target brand. They were then asked to rate the two brands. Participants were then given the results of a prelaunch product test. Some were told that the results of the test were positive and that the company decided to launch the product, which is preference consistent, while others were told the opposite, which is preference inconsistent. They were then asked to rate if the company's decision to launch (or not to launch) the product agreed or disagreed with their earlier judgment of the product. Results indicated that defense-motivated individuals form judgments that are consistent with their preferences.

In sum, the results across these three studies indicate that accuracy-minded individuals make objective decisions, impression-minded individuals form judgments based on outcomes, and defense-minded individuals make decisions based on their preferences (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005). These findings have significance for the work of psychologists, because if psychologists are presented with a situation that they feel threatens their personal ideology, they may make therapeutic decisions from a defense-motivated perspective rather than from an accuracy-based perspective.

Keller and Block (1999) specifically aimed to understand the role that arousal plays in motivated reasoning. They found that when arousal-based dissonance is created (i.e., participants were told the dire consequences of having unprotected sex after they had stated they were unlikely to use condoms when having sex in the next 30 days), participants were most likely to

exhibit high levels of message-relevance denial, lower levels of message-related thoughts, and lower intentions to engage in safe sex. This differs from situations in which cognition-based dissonance is created. In those settings, participants were most likely to experience message refutation thoughts, dismiss the message as being of lower quality, and not be persuaded to change their behavior.

### **Pilot Study**

In a preliminary study, Brenner (2011) conducted a pilot study to understand how school psychologists address ethical conflicts that arise through employment at religious institutions. Participants consisted of a convenience sample of 14 school psychologists. The researcher emailed a recruitment letter describing the research and containing a link to the survey to colleagues and acquaintances. They, in turn, forwarded the email to those who would be eligible to participate. A total of 20 individuals began the survey, but only 14 completed it in its entirety. The 14 participants consisted of 13 females and 1 male ranging from 27 to 35 years of age. All were masters' level school psychologists. Six had been in practice for 0 to 3 years, seven had been practicing for 4 to 6 years, and one had been in practice for 10 years. Most worked for a school (n=11), one worked for an agency, and two worked at other places of employment. Ten participants were affiliated with an organized religion; four were not.

Participants completed the Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality, a standardized measure of religious affiliation. They were also presented with three scenarios in which a child comes to counseling due to conflicted feelings of homosexuality, and the consideration of entering into a homosexual relationship. Variations among the scenarios included whether the psychologist was employed by a religious institution or private practice, and the age of the child. Following each scenario, participants were asked how they would

advise the child, if their response is dependent upon the shared religion, if an ethical conflict exists, and whether or not their response would change if their employer was not religiously affiliated or if the child did not feel a conflict.

Results were limited due to the small sample size, and other limitations. I had expected psychologists who score higher on the MMPS and were employed by schools that share the same religion would be more likely to advise clients in accordance with the client's and the school's religion, and that those working with religious young adults in the private sector would be more likely to encourage the client to explore options that may not be completely aligned with the client's or the client's parents' religion. Qualitative analysis indicated that, however, that 50% of the participants' responses did not change based on the changes in the scenarios. This was true even if the participants believed that there was an ethical conflict in some scenarios but not others. Furthermore, while some focused on the conflict with their own religion, others focused on the conflict between their employer and what they would want to advise the child, independent of their religion. Those who changed their responses were more likely to have advised the high school student to a religious authority, but would act very differently when the variable changed in the other scenarios.

I had also hypothesized that psychologists who believed that ethical issues arise from religious-service conflicts and who believe that the client is disturbed by the conflict with religion will be more likely to consult with, or refer the client to, a spiritual or religious figure. In fact, while some respondents said they would change their responses if the child did not feel a religious conflict, most did not. Furthermore, the respondents' view as to whether or not a conflict existed did not necessarily reflect their advice for the child. In the first scenario (religious child in a religious high school), seven respondents felt that there was an ethical conflict, while

seven felt there was not. Four respondents (two from each category) referred the child to a religious authority; four respondents (three who believed there was an ethical conflict and one who said there was not) referred the child to an outside counselor. In the second scenario (religious child with religious parents), three respondents felt there was an ethical conflict, and all referred the child to an outside counselor. In the third scenario (religious college-aged student in an affiliated college), five respondents felt there was an ethical conflict while nine said there was not. Their advice in all areas varied. Also, many respondents stated that their actions stemmed from bullying concerns for the homosexual child, and not from their religious beliefs.

While the pilot study contained many limitations and errors in execution, it also illuminated aspects of the practice of psychology I had not considered before. Homosexuality, an issue presented in each scenario that the participants responded to, can be a polarizing issue. The possibility was raised that perhaps the psychologists who responded were self-deceiving when they stated that they were not responding based on their religion, but only based on their concern over the child being bullied. The research described above shows how individuals who subscribe to any ideology may be motivated to present themselves in a certain way, and to act in a way that corresponds with their ideological beliefs.

### **Rationale and Hypotheses**

The results of the pilot study as well as previous research in the areas of religion, self-deception, and motivated reasoning indicated a dearth in available research on how psychologists' ideologies influence their professional decision-making. There are few studies related to how, or if, psychologists are able to separate their personal ideologies from their professional decisions. Investigation of this issue is of significance considering the lack of training programs on how to address individuals from different religions, cultures, and ideologies, as well as the ethical

requirement from APA and NASP that psychologists be aware of their competence limitations and their biased feelings. This study aimed to address this gap in the current research. There are a number of methodological difficulties that would emerge from attempting to study self-deception and motivated reasoning. To truly measure those variables, it would be necessary to obtain individual's reports of their honest opinions and values, examine their behavior as it relates to their opinions and values, and then have the individuals explain their behaviors. While this type of study would accurately address whether or not people behave in ways consistent to their beliefs, and how they rationalize their behavior if they are not behaving as such, such a study would require time and resources not available to most researchers. For this reason, I chose to question participants about their personal, professional, and educational backgrounds, as well as their ideological beliefs. I also questioned their school policy preferences. This allowed to me to relate participants' values and preferences with their reported behavior in vignettes that may run counter to their values and beliefs.

Hypotheses were as follows:

HO1: A significant number of participants who self-identify as having an ideology will respond to school policy questions in a manner consistent with their reported ideology.

HO2: A substantial number of participants will report that they feel at least "mostly prepared" to address issues related to ideology, but concurrently report that they have not taken a class and/or workshop related to ideological issues.

HO3: Of the participants who self-identify as having a particular ideology, a significant number will opt out of working with clients who present with seemingly polar ideologies.

## CHAPTER III

### Method

This chapter presents the methodology of the current study, which examined the relationship between school psychologists' personal ideologies and their decision-making in counseling. The chapter includes sections on participant selection, description of the instrument used, procedure, and data analysis.

#### Participant Selection

Following the approval of Institutional Review Board of the City University of New York Graduate School and University Center, I solicited participation from practicing school psychologists. I sent an email (see Appendix A) to APA members of Division 15: Educational Psychology and Division 16: School Psychology, which totaled 1,586 emails. I also sent messages through the NASP Community website to 2,450 members of National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). These methods allowed me to access many school psychologists who belong to a professional organization and are comfortable responding to online surveys. The email described the study, informed participants of their rights, and provided a link to the questionnaire.

To ensure confidentiality, participants were not asked to provide any identifying information. Participants were provided with my email address in order to contact me with any questions about the study or to request a summary of the results once the study was completed. This email did not link to participants' questions and survey responses. This further ensured participant privacy and confidentiality.

At least 100 participants were needed to respond to the survey with useable data to enable me to complete the anticipated statistical comparisons. This is the sample size needed to detect a medium effect size at the  $p < .01$  level of significance (Cohen, 1992). The email

was sent to approximately 4,036 individuals, of which 166 completed the survey. The return rate for survey completers was 4.11%. However, because the organizations solicited have overlapping membership, it is not possible to know the exact number of individuals asked. Fifty emails sent were returned to sender because their emails were invalid or their boxes were full. An additional 110 individuals started the survey but were eliminated from data analysis. Forty-two respondents were eliminated because they were students, and 3 respondents were eliminated because it was determined that their responses were duplicates. An additional 65 respondents did not respond to any of the vignette questions, and so were eliminated as they did not provide usable data.

### **Participant Demographics**

Participants completed a variety of demographic questions related to their personal, professional, and ideological background. Table 1 presents personal demographic information including age, gender, and ethnicity. The majority of survey respondents was Caucasian women between the ages of 25 and 35 years old. Relative to NASP members, this sample had similar gender and ethnicity percentages, however the respondents were younger than most NASP members (Curtis, Castillo, & Gelley, 2012). Relative to APA members of both Division 15 and Division 16, the sample consisted of a higher percentage of women (APA Directory, 2010).

Table 1

*Personal Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Demographic	Variable	<i>n</i>	%	NASP Membership Data	APA Division 15 Membership Data	APA Division 16 Membership Data
Age <sup>a</sup>	<u>Years</u>					
	25-35	60	36.14			
	36-45	32	19.28			
	46-55	21	12.65			
	56-65	26	15.66			
	66-75	20	12.05			
	75+	7	4.22			
Gender <sup>b</sup>	Male	38	23.31	23.4	56.9	46.6
	Female	125	76.69	76.6	43.0	53.2
Ethnicity <sup>c</sup>	Asian or Pacific Islander	1	0.61	1.3	3.6	1.7
	African American (not of Hispanic Origin)	6	3.66	3	3.5	1.8
	Hispanic	10	6.10	3.4	2.0	2.8
	Native American or Alaskan Native	0	0	0.6	.1	.1
	Caucasian (not of Hispanic origin)	141	85.98	90.7	76.4	77.8
	Other	6	3.66	1	not reported	.1

<sup>a</sup>*n* = 166. <sup>b</sup>*n* = 163. <sup>c</sup>*n* = 164.

Professional demographic information was collected from participants. Table 2 presents the professional information, including the highest degree achieved, practice setting, years of practice, and theoretical orientation. There were an equivalent number of Ph.D. respondents and "Other" respondents to the survey. It is possible that school psychologists consider their certification in school psychology to be their highest degree, and as such, many may have selected "Other" instead of M.S.Ed. University data were collected qualitatively. The highest frequency of an undergraduate school attended was five; the highest frequency of a graduate school attended was three. This indicates the wide range of respondents' training programs. A majority of respondents is employed in public schools; even those who are also employed elsewhere have schools as their primary employer. This is consistent with NASP data as 83% of their members are primarily employed by public schools (Curtis, Castillo, & Gelley, 2012). The range of years of employment was large and normally distributed. Most respondents (63.57%) are in their first 20 years of employment. The most recent NASP survey on demographics included a years of experience question, but those results were not in the article published in 2012. The most recent NASP results available were from 2008 and indicated that the mean length of experience for NASP members was 14.8 years (Curtis et al., 2008); this is consistent with the results in this study. APA members constituted 45.78% of the sample, and of those, a majority (70.67%) belong to Division 16 (School Psychology). Most of the participants (75.46%) are NASP members.

Table 2

*Professional Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Demographics	Variable	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Degree <sup>a</sup>	Ph.D.	58	34.94
	Psy.D.	15	9.04
	Ed.D.	10	6.02
	M.S.Ed.	24	14.46
	Other	59	35.54
Practice Setting <sup>b</sup>	Public School	131	79.89
	Private School	20	12.20
	Private Practice	29	17.68
	Hospital	2	1.22
	Other	30	18.29
Length of Practice <sup>c</sup>	0-5 years	33	25.58
	6-10 years	21	16.28
	11-20 years	28	21.71
	21-30 years	21	16.28
	31-40 years	16	12.40
	41-50 years	4	3.10
	51+ years	2	1.55
	Never practiced	4	3.10

Table 2 (continued)

Demographics	Variable	<i>n</i>	% of sample
APA member <sup>d</sup>	Yes	76	45.78
	No	90	54.22
APA Division <sup>e</sup>	Division 15	17	18.29
	Division 16	53	70.67
	Other	39	52.00
NASP Member <sup>f</sup> ( <i>N</i> =151)	Yes	123	75.46
	No	40	24.54

*Note:* Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could choose more than one option.  
<sup>a</sup>*n* = 166. <sup>b</sup>*n* = 164. <sup>c</sup>*n* = 129. <sup>d</sup>*n* = 166. <sup>e</sup>*n* = 75. <sup>f</sup>*n* = 163.

Participants responded to questions related to their ideology and personal choices, including theoretical orientation, spiritual and religious preferences, and political party. Table 3 describes the ideological demographics of the participants. A majority of respondents endorse the cognitive behavioral orientation. Most consider themselves spiritual (80.61%), while more than half (52.73%) reported that they consider themselves religious. Those participants were asked an open ended question asking to state their religious affiliation. An equal number of respondents reported that they were either Catholic (31.76%) or Protestant (31.76%). The remaining participants described themselves with the more general descriptor of Christian (20.00%), Jewish (10.59%) or Other (5.88%). Respondents also indicate that they endorse or

identify with a variety of political parties with a majority endorsing or identifying with the Democratic party.

Table 3

*Ideological Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

Demographic	Variable	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Theoretical Orientation <sup>a</sup>	Behavioral	11	6.71
	Cognitive	2	1.22
	Cognitive-Behavioral	96	58.54
	Eclectic	33	20.12
	Psychodynamic	2	1.22
	Systems	6	3.66
	Feminism	0	0
	Other	14	8.54
	Spiritual Self-identification <sup>b</sup>	Yes	133
No		31	19.39
Religious Self-identification <sup>c</sup>	Yes	87	52.73
	No	78	47.27
Religious Preference <sup>d</sup>	Christian	17	20.00
	Jewish	9	10.59
	Catholic	27	31.76

Table 3 (continued)

Demographics	Variable	<i>n</i>	% of sample
	Protestant	27	31.76
	Other	5	5.88
Political Party <sup>e</sup>	Democratic	98	59.04
	Independent	29	17.47
	Republican	25	15.06
	None	9	5.41
	Other	5	3.01

<sup>a</sup>*n* = 164. <sup>b</sup>*n* = 164. <sup>c</sup>*n* = 165. <sup>d</sup>*n* = 85. <sup>e</sup>*n* = 166.

Participants were also asked to select from a list of professional journals and magazines their professional and recreational reading choices. They were also asked to provide names of journals, magazines, or newspapers that they choose to read that were not listed. Table 4 presents the reading choices of the participants. Consistent with the large percentage of NASP members in the sample, the publication chosen most often was *Communiqué*, the NASP Newspaper. The next publication chosen was *School Psychology Quarterly*, an APA journal. It should be noted, however, that there seemed to be confusion among participants between *School Psychology Quarterly*, which is an APA publication, and *School Psychology Review*, a NASP publication that was left off the option list in error. Seventeen participants (10.49%) wrote in the *School Psychology Review* in the open ended portion, and a few questioned if listing *School Psychology Quarterly* was an error. Therefore, it is possible that some respondents chose the *School Psychology Quarterly*, assuming it was interchangeable with *School Psychology Review*. Other

publications chosen were *American Psychologist* (35.80%) and *Journal of Educational Psychology* (14.81%).

When participants were asked if there were any other journals, newspapers, or magazines (professional or otherwise) that they read regularly, a plurality (42.70%) listed professional publications. Other publications read included entertainment magazines (38.20%) and major newspapers or news websites (37.08%).

Table 4

*Professional and Personal Reading Choices of Participants*

Demographic	Variable	<i>n</i>	% of sample
APA/NASP journals and newspapers <sup>a</sup>	<i>Communiqué</i>	100	61.73
	<i>School Psychology Quarterly</i>	78	48.15
	<i>American Psychologist</i>	58	35.80
	Other	28	17.28
	<i>Journal of Educational Psychology</i>	24	14.81
	None	15	9.26
	<i>Developmental Psychology</i>	9	5.56
	<i>Neuropsychology</i>	9	5.56
	<i>Psychological Assessment</i>	6	3.70
Other Reading Materials <sup>b</sup>	Professional	38	42.70
	Entertainment	34	38.20
	Major newspaper/news website	33	37.08
	Other	16	17.98
	Local newspaper	12	13.48
	News magazine	8	8.99
	Religious Publication	5	5.62
	None	3	3.37

*Note:* Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents can choose more than one option.

*Note:* Participants selected from a list of journals and newspapers; options chosen by less than 3% ( $n = 5$ ) of participants are not listed.

<sup>a</sup> $n = 162$ . <sup>b</sup> $n = 89$ .

## **Instruments**

An online research questionnaire was used. This measure was developed by me, my dissertation committee, and Dr. Amy M. Racanello. The research questionnaire included four measures querying: (a) demographic information, (b) ideological involvement, (c) attitudes toward school policies, and (d) decision-making in counseling.

The first page was the information sheet (see Appendix A). It explained the study and requirements for participation. The participants' completion of the survey was considered their informed consent. The information sheet explained that I am the principle investigator in the research and that I will not have access to any identifying participant information. The data were not coded for confidentiality because participants did not include any identifying information when completing the questionnaire. The survey was designed not to allow participants to go back to review and/or change answers once they complete the items.

The questionnaire took an average of 40 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, participants had the opportunity to enter their email addresses into a lottery to receive one of three \$25 American Express gift cards. To ensure that participants' email addresses and their responses would not be connected, a separate link was provided to enter email addresses into the gift certificate lottery.

**Demographic information.** Participants responded to questions related to their personal and professional background (see Appendix C). Personal demographic questions included age, gender, and ethnicity. Educational demographics included the participants' terminal degree, their undergraduate university, and their graduate university. Professional demographics included participants' practice setting and their years in practice. Finally, ideological and personal preference demographics included participants' theoretical orientation, their spiritual

and religious preferences, their endorsement or identification with a political party, their membership in professional organizations, and their professional and personal reading choices.

**Training and preparedness.** Participants completed a series of Likert scale questions related to four areas, namely, culture and diversity, gender, religion, and ethics (see Appendix D). Participants responded to questions indicating their knowledge of these areas, the years since they had received training in these areas, and their level of comfort working in these areas.

**School Policy Attitudes.** The self-deception scales currently available were not utilized in this study as there was concern that they would not yield valid results among a population familiar with standardized questionnaires, such as school psychologists. In its stead, a 12 question survey related to school policy decisions was created and included in the overall questionnaire (see Appendix E). Patterns of responses were analyzed .

**Professional decisions related to personal ideology (i.e., motivated reasoning).** Participants were presented with five vignettes (see Appendix F). One vignette was neutral and related to everyday issues a school psychologist might face. Four vignettes were designed to trigger a reaction in individuals affiliated with a particular ideology. In each of the four scenarios of interest in the study, the psychologist was presented with an ideologically-based issue. Issues related to psychological orientation, sexual orientation, cultural identity, and gender stereotypes. Following each vignette were three questions: (1) What would the participant do for the student? (2)What are the participant's goals for the student? and (3) Are there any school policies related to the participant's response? The vignettes and the questions were generated after beta-testing was conducted using volunteer participants. All beta-test participants were psychologists who were not linked to the researcher in order to ensure purely objective feedback.

## **Procedure**

As principal investigator, I first sought approval for the study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the City University of New York Graduate School and University Center. Once IRB approval was received, I emailed APA divisional members and NASP members. The study was conducted online, and participants completed the research questionnaire online using SurveyMonkey.com.

The survey took the participants on average 40 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, participants had the option to enter into an American Express gift card lottery. The lottery offered participants a chance to win one of three \$25 American Express gift cards. To ensure participant confidentiality, individuals who elected to enter the lottery entered their email addresses into a new website link that was not associated with the questionnaire. Participant email addresses entered into the gift certificate lottery were not connected in any way to survey responses. Participant responses were downloaded from the survey website onto a spreadsheet. The data was then transferred to SPSS and SAS for statistical analysis.

## **Data Analysis**

The study used a repeated measures design for the vignettes. To test the hypotheses and analyze the data from this study, various statistical methods were employed. Descriptive statistics were used to tabulate the demographic variables as well participants' reported preparedness in areas of ethics, religion, culture, and gender. Descriptive statistics were also used for participants' responses regarding their ideology, self-deception, and decisions made in school counseling. Data were examined using cross tabulation, frequency counts, and chi-square analyses. Data were further analyzed through the use of correlations to determine statistically significant relationships between items.

## CHAPTER IV

### Results

The aim of this study was to explore possible relationships between a psychologist's ideological beliefs and the decisions he or she makes in counseling students. This chapter reports descriptive statistics and results for the hypotheses of this research.

#### **Results Related to Training and Preparedness**

Participants completed a series of Likert scale questions related to four areas, namely, culture and diversity, gender, religion, and ethics. Participants responded to questions indicating their knowledge of these areas, the number of years since they have received training in these areas, and their level of comfort working in these areas. They were also questioned regarding their familiarity with and adherence to the NASP and APA ethics codes.

Table 5 presents the respondents' graduate school coursework in the four areas of interest and their most recent coursework in those areas. Most respondents took graduate school courses in the areas of culture and diversity and ethics, but did not take courses in the areas of gender and religion. This is not surprising as ethics and multicultural courses are generally required courses in NASP and APA programs, but gender and religion courses are not required. The time since participants completed their coursework in the four areas of interest varied. In the last five years, a large majority of participants had taken courses in culture and diversity (78.66%) and ethics (81.99%), while only a small percentage had never taken a course in these areas (3.66% and 2.48%, respectively). More than half of the respondents (54.93%) had taken a class in gender in the last five years, while 20.99% had never taken a gender issues class at all. Religion courses were taken least, with 40% of the respondents having never taken a class in the subject.

Table 5

*Coursework in Areas of Interest*

Question	Variable	Interest Area							
		Culture and Diversity		Gender		Religion		Ethics	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Graduate Course	Yes	125	77.64	48	30.57	20	13.25	145	88.41
	No	36	22.36	109	69.43	131	86.75	19	11.59
Time since course completion	Within the last year	50	30.49	24	14.81	11	6.88	69	42.86
	1-5 years	79	48.17	65	40.12	30	18.75	63	39.13
	6-10 years	20	12.20	27	16.67	34	21.25	15	9.32
	>10 years	9	5.49	12	7.41	21	13.13	10	6.21
	Never	6	3.66	34	20.99	64	40.00	4	2.48

Participants were asked about their level of preparedness upon graduation and their current level of preparedness in the four areas of interest. Table 6 presents those results. Upon graduation, 91% of the respondents felt somewhat to mostly prepared to address multicultural issues, though only 78% had taken a multicultural issues class while they were in graduate school (see Table 5). Within the last 10 years, however, 91% of respondents took a continuing education class in this area, and 99% of them felt prepared to address issues related to culture and diversity at the time of the survey. Participants also felt prepared to address ethical issues; 90% felt prepared upon graduation, consistent with the 88% who had taken an ethics course (see

Table 5). At the time they completed the survey, 100% felt prepared to address ethical issues, with 91% having taken a class in the last 10 years (see Table 5).

In the area of gender, 78% of respondents felt somewhat to mostly prepared to address gender-related issues upon graduation, in spite of only 30.57% having taken a gender issues course in their graduate programs (see Table 5). When they completed the survey, almost the entire sample (94%) felt prepared to address this issue; 72% took a class in the last 10 years (Table 5), indicating that this was an area in which respondents sought workshops or courses to receive training. A majority of respondents (63%) felt somewhat to mostly prepared to address religious issues upon graduation, though only 13% took a religious issues course while in graduate school (Table 5). Although 84% of respondents felt prepared to address religious issues when they completed the survey, 40% never took a course related to religion. This is perhaps an indication that individuals utilize their own experiences in their feelings of preparedness.

Another avenue pursued was that perhaps as individuals amassed more life experience, they felt more prepared to address these areas of interest. While participants' ages were positively correlated with their years of experience ( $.427, p < .01$ ), there were no significant correlations found between their years of experience and the levels of preparedness they felt in the areas of interest. Crosstabulations also revealed that there was no increase of preparedness along with years of experience.

Table 6

*Level of Preparedness in Areas of Interest*

Question	Variable	Interest Area							
		Culture and Diversity		Gender		Religion		Ethics	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Upon Graduation	Very Prepared	40	24.39	24	14.81	10	6.21	73	45.06
	Mostly Prepared	69	42.07	51	31.48	38	23.60	72	44.44
	Somewhat Prepared	40	24.39	52	32.10	54	33.54	0	0
	Minimally Prepared	13	7.93	33	20.37	43	26.71	15	9.26
	Unprepared	2	1.22	2	1.23	16	9.94	2	1.23
Current	Very Prepared	67	41.61	53	32.92	32	19.88	95	59.01
	Mostly Prepared	78	48.45	69	42.86	70	43.48	63	39.13
	Somewhat Prepared	15	9.32	30	18.63	34	21.12	3	1.86
	Minimally Prepared	1	0.62	8	4.97	20	12.42	0	0
	Unprepared	0	0	1	0.62	5	3.11	0	0

Participants were asked to respond regarding their level of familiarity with the NASP and APA ethics codes; they were also asked if they adhere to the ethics codes. Their responses are tabulated in Table 7. Most participants (79.24%) felt "mostly familiar" or "very familiar" with the ethics code, and not a single respondent stated that they were "unfamiliar" with the ethics code. Almost all (95.68%) confidently stated that they always adhere to it.

Table 7

*Participants Familiarity with and Adherence to the Ethics Code*

Item		<i>n</i>	%
Familiarity with Ethics Code	Very Familiar	56	34.12
	Mostly Familiar	74	45.12
	Familiar	26	15.58
	Somewhat Familiar	8	4.88
	Unfamiliar	0	0
Adherence to Ethics Code	Yes	155	95.68
	No	7	4.32

**Results Related to School Policy Attitudes**

Table 8 presents participants' responses to the 12-question survey (Appendix E) developed to assess participants' preferences toward proposed school policies. Participants needed to determine if they would support the policy described. The only options provided were "Yes" and "No".

Table 8

*Participants' Responses to the School Policy Attitude Items*

Proposed School Policy	Response			
	Yes		No	
	<i>n</i>	% of sample	<i>n</i>	% of sample
Implement a 12-month school year	58	35.15	107	64.85
Promote abstinence education	53	32.52	110	67.58
Institute a brief prayer after morning announcements	42	25.77	121	74.23
Allow girls to try out for boys' sporting teams	156	94.55	9	5.45
Remove evolution from the curriculum	16	9.76	148	90.24
Require teachers to document intervention efforts before making academic referrals	157	95.73	7	4.27
Create a gender neutral bathroom	54	33.13	109	66.87
Encourage peer-led mediation sessions among students	155	94.51	9	5.49
Mandate that students sign an anti-bullying pledge	130	79.75	33	20.25
Give parents a choice between volunteering hours of service to the school or paying a fee	74	45.68	88	54.32
Remove the phrase "under God" from the pledge of allegiance	43	26.54	119	73.46
Separate boys and girls for academic classes	46	28.57	115	71.43

*Note: N = 165*

It was expected that a pattern would emerge based on participants' responses to the 12 questions and their vignette responses. A cluster analysis utilizing *K*-means clustering with two clusters was conducted. The cluster that emerged was related to conservative/liberal attitudes. Items in the cluster included school policies related to abstinence education, prayer after morning announcements, evolution in the school curriculum, the phrase "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, and unisex sporting teams. The cluster analysis indicates that there was homogeneity in the manner in which people responded to these items.

I also ran phi-correlations to determine which questions on the school policy survey correlated with each other. Table 9 presents the correlations between the individual questions. (See Appendix E for the list of questions.) Two clusters of three items were found. In the first cluster, a positive relationship was found between support for abstinence education (B in Table 9) and removal of evolution from the school curriculum (E in Table 9); those two items were negatively correlated with creation of a gender neutral bathroom (G in Table 9). In the second cluster, creation of a gender neutral bathroom (G in Table 9) was positively correlated with support for removing the phrase "under God" from the pledge of allegiance (K in Table 9); a positive correlation was found between support for the gender neutral bathroom (G in Table 9) and support for peer-led mediation groups (H in Table 9), while a negative correlation was found between support for peer-led mediation (H in Table 9) and support for removal of the phrase "under God" (K in Table 9). Thus, more conservative attitudes clustered together and more liberal attitudes behaved similarly, consistent with the cluster analysis described above.

Significant binary phi-correlations were also found. Removal of the phrase "under God" from the pledge of allegiance (K in Table 9) was negatively correlated with allowing parents the

choice between volunteering hours of service or paying a fee (J in Table 9); allowing parents a choice (J in Table 9) was positively correlated with prayer implementation (C in Table 9). Creation of a gender neutral bathroom (C in Table 9) was positively correlated with creation of a 12-month school year (A in Table 9), and with allowing girls to try out for male sporting teams (D in Table 9). Having neutral sporting teams (D in Table 9) was positively correlated with requiring students to sign an anti-bullying pledge (I in Table 9). Finally, peer led mediation (H in Table 9) was positively correlated with the requirement that teachers document intervention attempts before referring students for an evaluation (F in Table 9). As with the cluster correlations, conservative policies appear to be correlated with each other, as are liberal policies. Further comparisons between the school policy item responses and the vignette questions will be reported following the vignette analysis.

Table 9

*Phi- Correlations Among Items on the School Policy Attitudes Survey*

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
A	1											
B	0.042	1										
C	-0.002	0.338	1									
D	0.103	-0.004	0.020	1								
E	-0.142	0.211**	0.136	-0.011	1							
F	0.096	0.018	0.125	0.082	0.069	1						
G	0.235**	-0.234**	-0.145	0.170*	-0.187*	0.083	1					
H	-0.007	0.053	0.082	0.059	0.080	0.214**	0.170*	1				
I	-0.017	-0.009	0.054	0.212**	0.064	-0.031	0.026	0.079	1			
J	0.001	0.100	0.164*	0.060	0.070	0.073	-0.027	0.006	0.125	1		
K	0.128	-0.145	-0.292	0.024	-0.058	-0.010	0.274**	-0.163*	-0.014	-0.200**	1	
L	0.066	0.113	0.060	-0.026	0.020	0	0.060	0.034	0.083	0.075	0.035	1

*Note:*  $N = 165$  A = Implement a 12-month school year; B = Promote abstinence education; C = Institute a brief prayer after morning announcements; D = Allow girls to try out for boys' sporting teams; E = Remove evolution from the curriculum; F = Require teachers to document intervention efforts before making academic referrals; G = Create a gender neutral bathroom; H = Encourage peer-led mediation sessions among students; I = Mandate that students sign an anti-bullying pledge; J = Give parents a choice between

volunteering hours of service to the school or paying a fee; K = Remove the phrase “under God” from the pledge of allegiance; L = Separate boys and girls for academic classes.

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

## Results Related to Ideology and Decision Making

**Scoring and categorizing answers to items.** Participants were presented with five vignettes. Each vignette was followed by the same three items. The first item was a multiple choice question related to how the participant would proceed with the described client; the same four options were presented to participants after each vignette, namely, (1) see the client on a continuous basis, (2) see the client for a second preliminary assessment, (3) send for an assessment, and (4) refer to another professional. Participants were only able to choose one response.

The second and third items required open-ended responses. The second item requested participants to explain their goals for the child in the vignette, while the third asked if the plan of action they chose for the child was affected by school policy, and if so, to elaborate on that policy. After collecting all survey responses, I read through all open-ended responses for each item and developed a list of categories based on the common themes that had emerged *for each item*. I then read through the open-ended responses a second time, and coded each response into the categories that had emerged. Depending on the length and detail of the response, responses could be coded in more than one category. I then read through the responses a third time, to ensure that I had coded them correctly. Because the vignettes differed in content, this process produced categories that were specific to each vignette. Thus, because each open-ended item had different response categories, participants' answers can only be compared within the individual vignettes, and not across all five vignettes. Therefore, the first vignette items allowed comparisons between participants' plan of action choices for students in each vignette. The open-ended items allowed the participants to fully explain themselves, providing insight in to the plan of action choices they made.

In order to ensure that the coding process utilized was reliable, two colleagues were recruited to code the data. Research indicates that 30% of the data should be independently coded to establish inter-rater reliability (Magee & Ellis, 2000; Rehfeldt & Chambers, 2003). The mean interrater agreement was 88%.

Although one of the goals of the study was to examine the role of ideology in responding to the vignettes, because many participants reported belonging to the same theoretical orientation or political party (see Table 3), I was not able to use these variables in data analyses. Other comparisons were performed.

**Participants plan of action responses.** Table 10 represents an overview of the responses of the first vignette question across all five vignettes. Readers will note that for all vignettes, regardless of content, the highest number of participants chose to see the student for a second session. This response is in accord with recommended school psychology practice (Crespi & Demeyer, 2010). Every vignette presented a child who felt that he or she was in some form of distress. As school psychologists, each respondent should have made an effort to assist the child in some way, regardless of what each participant's job description is at his or her respective place of employment.

Table 10

*Summary of Participants' Plan of Action Responses Across Vignettes*

Response	Vignette									
	Neutral Vignette		Sexuality Vignette		Gender Vignette		Theoretical-Orientation Vignette		Multicultural Vignette	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
See client on continuous basis	22	13.25	25	17.01	26	25.24	4	4.35	18	19.78
See client for a second preliminary session	82	49.40	85	57.82	48	46.60	58	68.03	46	50.55
Send for an assessment	10	6.02	1	.68	9	8.74	16	17.39	0	0
Refer to another professional	52	31.33	36	24.49	20	19.42	14	15.22	27	29.67

**Neutral vignette.** The first vignette was of a neutral nature (i.e., it was designed not to trigger ideological conflict within participants) and served to establish a baseline for participants' responses. The presented problem for this child related to the scheduling of related services and some social adjustment concerns (see Appendix F for complete vignette). Table 11 presents participants' responses to this vignette. Almost half of the respondents (49.40%) elected to see the child for a second preliminary session. After reading through participants' responses to whether there was a school policy related to their decision, five categories emerged and responses were coded into those categories (see Table 11). The school policy cited most often was that related to the legal and ethical ramifications of not fulfilling the recommendations listed in a child's Individualized Education Plan (65.18%).

Table 11

*Participants' Responses to the Neutral Vignette Items*

Item	Response	<i>n</i>	%
Would you: <sup>a</sup>	See client on continuous basis	22	13.25
	See client for a second preliminary session	82	49.40
	Send for an Assessment	10	6.02
	Refer to another professional	52	31.33
School Policies Related to Decision <sup>b,c</sup>	No	21	15.56
	I don't know	2	1.48
	Legal/Ethical Obligation to Follow IEP	88	65.19
	Parent Consent Required for Counseling	12	8.89

<sup>a</sup>*n* = 166. <sup>b</sup>*n* = 135. <sup>c</sup>Categories were created after a qualitative reading of open-ended responses. Responses could be coded in more than one category.

Four categories emerged during the categorization and coding process of participants' description of their goals in working with the client. Table 12 presents the crosstabulation of participants' responses to this question. Over half (51.61%) chose delays related to the child's related service schedule *and* social concerns as their primary presenting concerns. Considering the presenting problems of the student, described above, this is appropriate as participants wanted to address the legal aspect of providing a child with his required services, as well as the underlying social adjustment difficulties the child was facing as a new transfer to the school (see Appendix F for the complete vignette.) Only one respondent stated that working with the client was not part of his or her job description.

Table 12

*Crosstabulation for Goals for Client in Neutral Vignette*

	Address speech delays	Address social-emotional concerns	This is not my job	Other
Address speech delays	31 (20.00%)	<b>80 (51.61%)</b>	0	1 (.65%)
Address social-emotional concerns		30 (19.35%)	0	0
This is not my job			3 (5.81%)	0
Other				1 (.65%)

*Note:*  $N = 155$ . Categories were created after a qualitative reading of open-ended responses. Responses could be coded in more than one category. One participant (1.94%) chose three options (address speech delays, address social-emotional delays, and other).

**Sexuality-related vignette.** The client in the second vignette was a homosexual male who was presenting with a discrimination complaint (see Appendix F for the complete vignette). Table 13 presents participants' responses to this vignette. A majority (57.82%) of the sample participants stated that they would see the child for a second preliminary session. It was expected that participants who had described themselves as religious and those who were members of a right-wing political party may have presented with a common pattern of responses due to the conflict between the child's practices and their ideological beliefs. This was not the case. Table 13 shows that religious participants and those who never took a religion course responded to the child's problems in similar percentages as did participants in the total sample. Goals for this child fell into seven categories that emerged from the categorization and coding process. They

are listed in the table. The goals listed most often were related to the child's emotional concerns (54.62 %) and the discrimination the child was facing (39.02%). Seven school policy categories also emerged. A plurality of participants (31.15%) stated that there was no school policy related to the decision they made on working with this client.

The results of the total sample were compared to those who identified as religious and those who had never taken a religion course but felt prepared to address religious issues. The responses of all three populations are also presented in Table 13. Responses are mostly similar across the populations, with some differences in percentages.

Table 13

*Participants' Responses to the Sexuality Vignette Items*

Item		Total Sample		Identified As Religious		Never Took a Course in Religion	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Would you: <sup>a</sup>	See client on continuous basis	25	17.01	8	10.00	17	18.28
	See client for a second preliminary session	85	57.82	47	58.75	59	63.44
	Send for an Assessment	1	.68	1	1.25	0	0
	Refer to another professional	36	24.49	24	30.00	17	18.28
Goals for the Client <sup>b,d</sup>	Religious/moral conflict	4	3.78	4	5.33	4	4.40
	Assist child in developing realistic expectations	17	11.81	6	8.00	10	10.98
	Address social-emotional concerns	77	53.47	34	45.33	53	58.24
	Address school discrimination policy	55	38.19	33	44.00	35	38.46
	I feel unprepared	6	4.17	4	5.33	3	3.30
	This is not my job	9	6.25	6	8.00	4	4.40
	Other	6	4.17	1	1.33	3	3.30
School Policies Related to Decision <sup>c,d</sup>	No	38	31.15	21	30.43	29	35.37
	I don't know	14	11.48	9	13.04	7	8.54
	School-wide policy (non-PDA, non-discrimination)	24	19.67	11	15.94	15	18.29
	Ethical ramifications of discrimination	11	9.02	4	5.80	9	10.98
	Parent Consent Required for Counseling	4	3.28	2	2.90	2	2.44
	More information needed	19	15.57	12	17.39	12	14.63
	Other	20	16.39	13	18.84	13	15.85

*Note:* Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could choose more than one option.

<sup>a</sup>Total Sample: *n* = 147; Religious Sample: *n* = 80; No Class Sample: *n* = 93. <sup>b</sup>Total Sample: *n* = 141; Religious Sample: *n* = 75; No Class Sample: *n* = 91. <sup>c</sup>Total Sample: *n* = 122; Religious Sample: *n* = 69; No Class Sample: *n* = 82. <sup>d</sup>Categories were created after a qualitative reading of open-ended responses. Responses could be coded in more than one category.

A large percentage of respondents reported being members of the same political party (see Table 3), making comparisons between groups difficult. Crosstabulations were performed to compare responses across three populations (i.e., the total sample, the sample who identified as religious, and the sample who had never taken a religion course but still felt prepared to address religious issues). Slight differences in percentages were found (see Table 13), and chi-square analyses were performed to statistically compare those who reported being religious with those who had never taken a course in religion. Table 14 presents the chi-square analyses between the participants who identified as religious and those who reported never taking a religion course, across the most frequent answer choices for this vignette. No statistical significance was found.

Table 14

*Chi-Square Values comparing Religious Identification and Most Recent Training for Each Item*

Item	Variable	<i>n</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i> value
Would you:	See this child on a continuous basis	36	3.081	.7292
	See client for a second preliminary session	87	5.368	.2516
	Refer to another professional	23	2.036	.5443
Goals for client	Address social-emotional concerns	77	1.923	.7499
	Address school discrimination policy	52	2.238	.0692
School Policy	No	37	8.517	.0744
	More information needed	21	3.662	.1432
	Other	19	9.115	.0583

*Note:*  $df = 4$ . In order to establish a significant relationship,  $\chi^2 > 9.49$  for  $p = 0.05$ . Twenty percent of cells have expected counts less than 5, making chi-square suspect.

**Gender-related vignette.** The gender-related vignette consisted of a female student who was struggling in her math class, and subsequently not attending classes (see Appendix F for the complete vignette). The student made gender specific remarks related to females and math achievement. It was expected that participants who self-identified as supporters of a feminist theoretical orientation might present with a common pattern of responses, however, none of the participants self-identified as such (see Table 3). Table 15 presents participants' responses to this vignette. Most respondents (46.60%) would see the child for a second preliminary session, with an additional 25.24% choosing to see her on a continuous basis. When participants were asked to

describe their goals for the client, their responses fell into eight categories. The primary goal of therapy, according to the respondents, related to the client's emotional well-being (44.94%) and the determining if she has some learning delays (38.20%). Six school policies emerged through the categorization and coding process. Most participants reported that there was no school policy that affected their reasoning for working with the child (33.33%), but some (21.33%) did cite their school's attendance policy and their school's required courses for graduation.

When these results were compared to participants' feelings of preparedness in gender related issues, they were consistent with the overall sample. These responses are also presented in Table 15. Similar to the total population, participants who had not taken a gender course but felt prepared to address gender issues also were more likely to see the child for a second preliminary session (49.23%) and they cited the same counseling goals for the client.

Table 15

*Participants' Responses to the Gender Vignette Items*

Item		Total Sample		Never Took a Gender Class	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Would you: <sup>a</sup>	See client on continuous basis	26	25.24	14	21.54
	See client for a second preliminary session	48	46.60	32	49.23
	Send for an Assessment	9	8.74	6	9.23
	Refer to another professional	20	19.42	13	20.00
Goals for the Client <sup>b,d</sup>	School requirements (i.e., attendance, graduation)	19	21.35	15	25.86
	Address academic delays	34	38.20	24	41.38
	Discuss gender equality	26	29.21	25	43.10
	Family Counseling	7	7.87	5	8.62
	Address social-emotional concerns	40	44.94	25	43.10
	Discuss future goals	14	15.73	12	20.69
	This is not my job	0	0	0	0
	Other	8	8.99	5	8.62
School Policies Related to Decision <sup>c,d</sup>	No	25	33.33	17	36.17
	I don't know	1	1.33	1	2.13
	School requirements (i.e., attendance, graduation)	16	21.33	10	21.28
	Parent Consent Required for Counseling	8	10.67	5	10.64
	Required referral for academics	15	20.00	8	17.02
Other	11	14.67	7	14.89	

*Note:* Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could choose more than one option.

<sup>a</sup> Total Sample:  $n = 103$ ; No Class Sample:  $n = 65$ . <sup>b</sup> Total Sample:  $n = 94$ ; No Class Sample:  $n = 58$ . <sup>c</sup> Total Sample:  $n = 75$ ; No Class Sample:  $n = 47$ . <sup>d</sup> Categories were created after a qualitative reading of open-ended responses. Responses could be coded in more than one category.

The relationship between training and preparedness in the interest area of gender was further examined through the use of chi-square analysis. These analyses were performed to statistically compare participants' reported level of preparedness with the time of their most recent course or workshop related to gender (i.e., within the last year, within the last 1 to 5 years, 6-10 years ago, more than 10 years ago, never). Table 16 presents the results among this sample across the most frequent responses for this vignette. No statistical significance was found.

Table 16

*Chi-Square Values comparing Reported Level of Preparedness and Most Recent Training across Items*

Item	Response	<i>n</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i> value
Would you:	See this child on a continuous basis	29	12.484	.4076
	See client for a second preliminary session	51	5.574	.9360
	Refer to another professional	20	2.646	.8518
Goals for client	School requirements (i.e., attendance, graduation)	25	8.611	.7357
	Address academic delays	33	9.808	.6328
	Address social-emotional concerns	39	15.397	.2204
School Policy	School requirements (i.e., attendance, graduation)	16	5.416	.7123
	Required referral for academics	15	6.542	.8864
	Other	15	19.429	.0787

*Note:*  $df = 12$ .

*Note:* In order to establish a significant relationship,  $\chi^2 > 21.03$  for  $p = 0.05$ .

*Note:* 20% of cells have expected counts less than 5, making chi-square suspect.

**Theoretical-orientation-related vignette.** This vignette related to Response-to-Intervention (RTI), a multi-tier approach to addressing school-based academic issues that is considered best practice by school psychologists (Finch, 2012). The vignette presents a situation in which frustration is expressed regarding the seemingly slow RTI process (see Appendix F for

the complete vignette). RTI uses assessment and data-management to determine when students require the next level of support (O'Connor & Freeman, 2012), aligning it with behavioral theorists. It was expected that there would be a pattern of responses based on respondents' self-reported theoretical orientation. This analysis was unable to be performed as an overwhelming majority ( $n = 132$ ; 78.66%) of the sample reported belonging to either the cognitive-behavioral or eclectic orientation (see Table 3), making true statistical comparisons difficult. Also, this vignette was the fourth one presented, and there was a large percentage of missing data (45%). Table 17 presents participants' responses to this vignette. Of the respondents who did answer the three items of the survey for this vignette, a majority (68.03%) would see the child for a second preliminary session.

Nine categories of goals for the client emerged through the categorization and coding process of open ended responses. Participants were primarily concerned with the child's academic goals (36.05%) as well as his social-emotional well-being (46.51%). They also frequently stated the importance of collaborating with other school professionals (36.05%). None of the respondents stated that working with this child was not part of his or her job description. Categorization of school policies that may have affected the participants' decision in working with the child resulted in six categories. The school policy mentioned most frequently was the legal requirement of following the tier levels of RTI before conducting an evaluation (50.63%).

Table 17

*Participants' Responses Theoretical Orientation Vignette Items*

Item	Response	<i>n</i>	%
Would you: <sup>a</sup>	See client on continuous basis	4	4.35
	See client for a second preliminary session	58	68.03
	Send for an Assessment	16	17.39
	Refer to another professional	14	15.22
Goals for the Client <sup>b,d</sup>	Collaborate with teachers/specialists	31	36.05
	Address social-emotional concerns	31	36.05
	Address academic concerns	40	46.51
	Encourage patience through the RTI process	23	26.74
	Speak to child's family	11	12.79
	Assess/create IEP	9	10.47
	Data related	24	27.91
	This is not my job	0	0
School Policies Related to Decision <sup>c,d</sup>	No	16	20.25
	I don't know	1	1.27
	Legal obligation to follow RTI tiers	40	50.63
	School policy to evaluate struggling students	6	7.59
	Parent Consent Required for Counseling	5	6.33
	Other	14	17.72

*Note:* Results should be interpreted with caution due to the large percentage of missing data.

*Note:* Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could choose more than one option.

<sup>a</sup> *n* = 92. <sup>b</sup> *n* = 86. <sup>c</sup> *n* = 79. <sup>d</sup> Categories were created after a qualitative reading of open-ended responses. Responses could be coded in more than one category.

**Culture-related vignette.** The final vignette related to cultural identification. The subject was a female who was receiving a culture-specific award, but who did not identify with that culture (see Appendix F for the full vignette). It was expected that there would be a pattern of responses based on the respondents' cultural identity. This vignette was not able to be statistically analyzed due to the amount of missing data (45%). Table 18 presents participants'

responses to this vignette. Of those who did respond to the three items, about half of the respondents would see the child for a second preliminary session. Nine counseling goal categories emerged through the categorization and coding process. Counseling goals described for this child varied with minimal consistency among participants. Goals listed included addressing the relationship the child has with her father (22.5%), talking with the principal about the unwanted award (22.5%), and helping the client "accept" her heritage (20%). Six school policy categories emerged from the categorization process, with about half of the sample stating that there was no school policy related to their decisions in working with the child.

Further analysis related to level of preparedness and training in areas of culture and diversity could not be performed as most of the sample took a course and felt prepared; within the last ten years, 91% of respondents took a class in this area, and 99% currently felt prepared to address issues in this area (see Table 6).

Table 18

*Participants' Responses to the Multicultural Vignette Items*

Item	Response	<i>n</i>	%
Would you: <sup>a</sup>	See client on continuous basis	18	19.78
	See client for a second preliminary session	46	50.55
	Send for an Assessment	0	0
	Refer to another professional	27	29.67
Goals for the Client <sup>b,d</sup>	Help child accept her heritage	16	20.00
	Help child choose her own culture	13	16.25
	Teach self-advocacy skills	11	13.75
	Address issues related to father	18	22.50
	Talk to principal	18	22.50
	Family therapy	5	6.25
	Racial/Cultural Tolerance and education	13	16.25
	This is not my job	2	2.50
School Policies Related to Decision <sup>c,d</sup>	Other	26	32.50
	No	39	59.09
	I don't know	5	7.58
	This is not my job	6	9.09
	Parent Consent Required for Counseling	5	7.58
	Requirement to be culturally sensitive	7	10.61
	Other	4	6.06

*Note:* Results should be interpreted with caution due to the large percentage of missing data. Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could choose more than one option.

<sup>a</sup> *n* = 91. <sup>b</sup> *n* = 80. <sup>c</sup> *n* = 66. <sup>d</sup> Categories were created after a qualitative reading of open-ended responses. Responses could be coded in more than one category.

### Results Related to School Policy Attitudes and Vignettes

I ran phi-correlations between each of the school policy attitude questions and the vignette questions to determine if there was any relationship between participants' school policy preferences and their plan of action for each of the students presented, the goals for that student, or the school policies they cited as having an effect on their chosen plan of action. First, I ran cross tabulations between each of the three vignette questions and the 12 school policies to

determine the frequencies of each option. I repeated this for all five vignettes. Then a chi-square test was performed to generate the association between all the frequencies. Finally, the phi-correlation was generated to determine the degree of association between each school policy and the responses to each vignette question. The correlation that emerged is generated from the chi-square data, allowing for a correlation between the binary school policy responses and the multiple choice/category vignette responses. The correlation simply informs one of the existence and degree of an association among all the responses. It is necessary to refer back to the crosstabulations in order to determine which response option or combination of options supports the correlation. As mentioned at the start of the "Results Related to Decision Making and Ideology" section, the plan of action question following each vignette had four response options, while participants' open-ended responses for the second and third questions (i.e., goals for the client and related school policies) were coded into categories developed by the research (see "Scoring and Categorizing Answers to Items") that are unique to each vignette.

Table 19 presents the phi-correlations between the list of school policies and the vignette responses. (See Appendix E for the list of questions from the school policy attitudes survey and Appendix F for the complete vignette.) There were items on the school policy attitudes survey that I expected would correlate with specific vignettes. I expected the neutral vignette to correlate with items that were not related to any particular ideology, such as support for a 12-month school year (A in Table 19), encouragement of peer-led mediation sessions (H in Table 19), requiring students to sign an anti-bullying pledge (I in Table 19), and providing parents with a choice between volunteering hours of service or paying a fee (J in Table 19). No significant correlations were found. In fact, these items were also not found to correlate with each other (see Table 9).

For the gender-related vignette, I expected correlations to emerge with items related to gender roles, such as allowing girls to try out for boys sporting teams (D in Table 19), creating a gender neutral bathroom (G in Table 19), and separating boys and girls for academic classes (L in Table 19). No significant correlations were found between the vignette questions and these self-deception questions, however, support for gender neutral bathrooms and for gender neutral sports teams were positively correlated (see Table 9).

Significant correlations were found between the sexuality-related vignette and some of the school policy attitude responses. Significance was found at the  $p < .05$  significance level, indicating that in every 20 significant responses, one can be due to chance. I expected the sexuality-related vignette to correlate with items associated with religious doctrine or with politically conservative policies, including support for promotion of abstinence education (B in Table 19), institution of a brief prayer after morning announcements (C in Table 19), removal of evolution from the curriculum (E in Table 19), and removal of the phrase "under God" from the pledge of allegiance (K in Table 19). Some of the expected associations were realized, as were some unexpected associations. As expected, individuals' responses as to the plan of action with the child in the sexuality-related vignette were correlated with promoting abstinence education (B in Table 19); unexpectedly, it was also associated with separating boys and girls for academic classes (L in Table 19). Support of abstinence education was expected for those of a religious background. The sexuality vignette was created with this population in mind, and gender neutral classes may appeal to the religious and conservative, so those associations are understandable. Another unexpected association was found between participants' goals for this child and requiring the teacher to document interventions before referring for assessments (F in Table 19). This association is likely due to chance.

There was no association was found for the sexuality-related vignette and prayer implementation, removal of evolution from the curriculum, or removal for the phrase "under God". This is consistent with previous analyses that did not show differences between the responses of religious individuals and the overall sample population (see Tables 14 and 15). This may be an indication that participants chose to respond to hypothetical vignettes with best practices in mind.

Separating boys and girls for academic classes (L in Table 19) was also associated with participants' goals for the client in the theoretical-orientation vignette; this was not an expected association, and may also be due to a chance association. (See Appendix E for the list of questions from the school policy survey and Appendix F for the complete vignette.)

The culture-related vignette was associated with two of the school policies. (See Appendix E for the list of questions from the school policy attitude survey and Appendix F for the complete vignette.) Participants' plan of action was associated with a policy that provides parents a choice between volunteering hours of service or paying a fee (J in Table 19); while this was not an expected result, it is perhaps understandable considering immigrant families and the financial hardships they face (Yu & Singh, 2012). The school policies participants' listed in this vignette were associated with creation of a gender neutral bathroom (G in Table 19). The association was not expected, and may be due to a chance association.

Table 19

*Correlations between Responses to School Policy Attitudes Survey and Vignettes*

Vignette	Vignette Item	Self-Deception Item											
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Neutral	Plan of Action	0.139	0.165	0.042	0.098	0.004	0.211	0.171	0.098	0.056	0.171	0.052	0.177
	Goals	0.126	0.204	0.164	0.194	0.159	0.162	0.150	0.089	0.216	0.184	0.169	0.278
	School Policy	0.169	0.185	0.296	0.138	0.093	0.449	0.131	0.201	0.218	0.266	0.155	0.215
Sexuality	Plan of Action	0.138	0.244*	0.233	0.056	0.047	0.210	0.122	0.037	0.100	0.134	0.065	0.232*
	Goals	0.254	0.353	0.306	0.177	0.380	0.392*	0.305	0.374	0.292	0.190	0.263	0.242
	School Policy	0.327	0.360	0.335	0.376	0.236	0.204	0.399	0.274	0.227	0.344	0.352	0.183
Gender	Plan of Action	0.055	0.155	0.192	0.191	0.105	0.106	0.189	0.112	0.172	0.149	0.134	0.118
	Goals	0.520	0.583	0.476	0.334	0.491	0.426	0.511	0.693	0.634	0.654	0.607	0.627
	School Policy	0.219	0.266	0.181	0.193	0.360	0.167	0.213	0.144	0.299	0.304	0.127	0.170

Table 19 (continued)

Vignette	Vignette Item	Self-Deception Item											
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Theoretical Orientation	Plan of Action	0.169	0.034	0.238	0.151	0.105	0.104	0.178	0.188	0.162	0.124	0.130	0.169
	Goals	0.645	0.692	0.667	0.556	0.595	0.524	0.719	0.426	0.630	0.697	0.673	0.823*
	School Policy	0.315	0.297	0.260	0.195	0.363	0.133	0.273	0.154	0.173	0.377	0.277	0.237
Cultural	Plan of Action	0.153	0.229	0.096	0.086	0.053	0.140	0.045	0.051	0.171	0.319**	0.164	0.169
	Goals	0.551	0.589	0.562	0.511	0.491	0.483	0.600	0.652	0.650	0.580	0.539	0.598
	School Policy	0.268	0.252	0.175	0.260	0.327	0.214	0.487**	0.221	0.165	0.330	0.347	0.327

*Note:*  $N = 165$ . A = Implement a 12-month school year; B = Promote abstinence education; C = Institute a brief prayer after morning announcements; D = Allow girls to try out for boys' sporting teams; E = Remove evolution from the curriculum; F = Require teachers to document intervention efforts before making academic referrals; G = Create a gender neutral bathroom; H = Encourage peer-led mediation sessions among students; I = Mandate that students sign an anti-bullying pledge; J = Give parents a choice between volunteering hours of service to the school or paying a fee; K = Remove the phrase "under God" from the pledge of allegiance; L = Separate boys and girls for academic classes.

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

The significant correlations found inform us of the existence and degree of association among all the responses. In order to determine the location of the correlation in the response options, I re-examined the crosstabulations of the significant correlations. Every option or combination of options was examined.

Table 20 presents the crosstabulations between the school policy attitudes and the vignette responses for the sexuality vignette. Three correlations were found in the vignette related to sexuality and school policy items. Specifically, participants' responses to the plan of action question related to the school policy of promotion of abstinence education and separating boys and girls for academic classes (see Table 19). An examination of the crosstabulation indicates that in both associations, choosing to see a child for a second preliminary session was correlated with *not* supporting the two school policies. As mentioned previously, this was an expected association as conservative school policies were expected to relate to the sexuality vignette. Participants' responses to their goals for this client were correlated with the school policy of requiring teachers to document interventions prior to referring for assessments (see Table 19). The crosstabulation reveals that support for teacher documentation prior to referral was correlated with listing social-emotional concerns and addressing a discriminatory school policy. This was not an expected association.

Table 20

<i>Crosstabulations of Responses with Significant Phi-Correlations for the Sexuality Vignette</i>			
Item	Response	School Policy	
		Promote abstinence education	
		Yes	No
Plan of Action	See client on a continuous basis	7 (4.80%)	18 (12.40%)
	See client for a second preliminary session	21 (14.50%)	63 (43.40%)
	Send client for an assessment	1 (.70%)	0
	Refer client to another professional	17 (11.70%)	18 (12.40%)
		Separate boys and girls for academic classes	
		Yes	No
Plan of Action	See client on a continuous basis	5 (3.50%)	20 (13.90%)
	See client for a second preliminary session	19 (13.20%)	64 (44.40%)
	Send client for an assessment	0	1 (.70%)
	Refer client to another professional	16 (11.0%)	19 (13.20%)
		Require teachers to document interventions prior to referring for assessment	
		Yes	No
Goals	Religious/moral conflict	4 (2.90%)	0
	Assist child in developing realistic expectations	7 (5.0%)	1 (.70%)
	Address social-emotional concerns	48 (34.50%)	2 (1.40%)
	Address school discrimination policy	31 (22.30%)	0
	I feel unprepared	4 (2.90%)	2 (1.40%)
	This is not my job	6 (4.30%)	2 (1.40%)
	Other	4 (2.90%)	2 (1.40%)

Table 20 (continued)

Item	Response	School Policy	
		Require teachers to document interventions prior to referring for assessment	
		Yes	No
Goals	Expectations + social-emotional concerns	5 (3.60%)	0
	Expectations + Discrimination	1 (.70%)	0
	Social-emotional+Discrimination	18 (12.90%)	0
	Discrimination + Other	1 (.70%)	0
	Expectation + Social Emotional + Discrimination	2 (1.40%)	0
	Expectation + Social-Emotional + Discrimination + Other	1 (.70%)	0

Table 21 presents the crosstabulation between school policy attitudes and the vignette responses for the culture-related vignette. Two correlations were found in the vignette related to culture. Participants' responses to their plan of action in working with the child were correlated with providing parents a choice between volunteering hours of service to the school or paying a fee (see Table 19). An examination of the crosstabulation indicates that choosing to see this client for a second preliminary session was correlated with *not* supporting that policy; as mentioned previously, this is an understandable result considering the financial hardships immigrant families face (Yu & Singh, 2012). The school policy of creating a gender neutral bathroom was correlated with participants' responses related to school policies that may have an effect on their decision to work with this child. The crosstabulation reveals that stating that there is no school policy related to working with the child was correlated with *not* supporting creation of a gender neutral bathroom.

The crosstabulation to examine the location of the correlation between the theoretical-orientation vignette and the school policy of separating boys and girls for academic classes is not presented here. The school policies listed varied widely, generating eight categories and participants' responses were coded in multiple categories. When a crosstabulation was conducted, it resulted in 39 different responses;  $n$  for these cells varied from one to six. This makes the correlation suspect.

Table 21

*Crosstabulations of Responses with Significant Phi-Correlations for the Culture Vignette*

Item	Response	School Policy	
		Yes	No
		Give parents a choice between volunteering hours of service to the school or paying a fee	
		Yes	No
Plan of Action	See client on a continuous basis	12 (13.60%)	5 (5.70%)
	See client for a second preliminary session	14 (15.90%)	32 (36.40%)
	Send client for an assessment	0	0
	Refer client to another professional	13 (14.80%)	12 (13.60%)
		Create a gender neutral bathroom	
		Yes	No
School Policy	No	9 (14.10%)	28 (43.80%)
	I don't know	0	5 (7.80%)
	This is not my job	0	6 (9.40%)
	Parent Consent Required for Counseling	2 (3.10%)	3 (4.70%)
	Requirement to be culturally sensitive	5 (7.80%)	2 (3.10%)
	Other	3 (4.70%)	1 (1.60%)

### Summary of Findings Related to the Hypotheses

Table 22 reports the hypotheses from this research, and indicates that two of the three hypotheses were not supported, while one was partially supported.

Table 22

*Overview of the Hypotheses*

HO Number	Hypothesis Content	Supported/ Not Supported
HO1:	A significant number of participants who self-identify as having an ideology will respond to school policy questions in a manner consistent with their reported ideology.	Not Supported
HO2:	A substantial number of participants will report that they feel at least "mostly prepared" to address issues related to ideology, but concurrently report that they have not taken a class and/or workshop related to ideological issues.	Partially Supported
HO3:	Of the participants who self-identify as having a particular ideology, a significant number will opt out of working with clients who present with seemingly polar ideologies.	Not Supported

I had intended to test H01 and H03 by conducting analyses to examine the relationships among the ideological demographic questions (i.e., political party, theoretical orientation, religious identity) and participants' vignette responses. As mentioned previously, participants' responses to the ideological questions made analyses difficult they responded in similar ways (see Table 3), with almost 60% of the sample choosing the same political party (Democratic) and the same theoretical orientation (cognitive-behavioral). When the answers given by participants who identified as religious were compared against those of the overall sample population using crosstabulations (see Table 13) and chi-square analyses (see Table 14); no significant differences were found. Participants' responses to the vignette questions were consistent across the sample (see Table 10). A majority of participants chose the same option across each vignette. Due to the consistency among responses, no relationship was found between participants' ideology and the manner in which they responded to questions.

I tested H02 by conducting crosstabulations between participants' coursework in each of the four interest areas and their reported levels of preparedness across the interest areas. I compared responses to participants' reported level of preparedness upon graduation with whether or not they had taken a course in graduate school. I also compared their current levels of preparedness with whether they reported taking a course or a workshop within the last five years. For the areas of culture and diversity and ethics, few people reported either never taking a course in their graduate program or having taken a course more than five years ago.

Table 23 presents the level of preparedness reported for individuals with minimal training or no training in the areas of gender and religion. In the interest area of gender, 69.23% of the sample had never taken a graduate school course. Of those, 35.19% reported that they still felt "mostly prepared" or "very prepared" to address gender issues upon graduation. Only 28.93% of the sample reported having not taken a course on gender issues in the last 10 years, indicating that many have chosen to take courses or workshops after completing their degrees. Of those who have not taken a course in the last 10 year, 65.22% felt "mostly" or "very" prepared to address gender issues at the time of the survey. Most of the participants had not taken a religion course in graduate school (86.75%); of those individuals, 24.81% felt "mostly prepared" or "very prepared" to address religion issues upon graduation. At the time of the survey, 53.50% of the total sample either never took a religion-related course, or took one over 10 years ago. Of those individuals, 55.95% stated that they feel "very prepared" or "mostly prepared" to address religion-related issues. H02 appears to be partially supported in the interest areas of gender and religion, but not in the areas of ethics and culture and diversity. Thus, even though substantial percentages of respondents had not taken graduate courses in gender issues and religious issues, they still believed they were prepared to addresses these issues in their practices.

Table 23

*Level of Preparedness for Participants with Minimal to No Training*

Interest Area	Time Period of Preparation Belief	Mostly to Very Prepared	
		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Upon Graduation <sup>a</sup>	38	35.19
	Survey Completion <sup>b</sup>	30	65.22
Religion	Upon Graduation <sup>c</sup>	32	24.81
	Survey Completion <sup>d</sup>	47	55.95

<sup>a</sup>*n*=108. <sup>b</sup>*n*= 46. <sup>c</sup>*n*= 129. <sup>d</sup>*n*= 84.

## CHAPTER V

### Discussion

This chapter presents key findings from the present study. It will also present the implications of these findings, the limitations of this study, and the directions for future research.

#### Key Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore possible relationships between a school psychologist's ideological beliefs and the decisions he or she makes in counseling students. I also wanted to determine if psychologists' level of training made them more or less inclined to address specific issues in school-based counseling.

Perhaps the most notable finding of the study is that there did not appear to be a relationship between participants' ideology and their goals for their clients. Every vignette presented a child who felt that he or she was in some form of distress. As school psychologists, each respondent should have made an effort to assist the child in some way, regardless of what each participant's job description is at his or her respective place of employment. Most respondents chose to see each child at least one additional time, choosing the appropriate "best practices" option (Crespi & Demeyer, 2010). The ethical element in this study was whether or not a school psychologist would provide counseling to a child if the psychologist felt unprepared to address the presenting issues. This was never able to be examined as most of the participants reported feeling prepared to address the four areas of interest. In fact, it appears that many even took post-graduate courses or workshops related to gender issues, perhaps to fill a void left by their graduate school training.

This was an exploratory study in an area that has not been examined by previous literature, so comparisons to the results of other studies are limited. However, considering the

literature reviewed at the start of this research paper, the possibility of self-deception and motivated reasoning must be addressed. The sample in this study is an educated and professional sample of individuals who know the appropriate way to address issues in counseling. When the study was constructed, I had thought that the vignettes would put people of particular ideologies in a defensive position and they would then justify or rationalize the reasons they may not want to work with a particular client. Instead, I may have motivated them to defend their training level. Participants' reported high levels of preparedness in certain areas of interest and were then asked questions about working with clients on issues that were related to those same areas.

Because motivated reasoning occurs when one tries to maintain one's previous beliefs (Keller & Block, 1999), it is entirely possible that when placed in a defensive position due to questions about their level of preparedness and professional practices, they stated that they would behave in a way that aligned with their opinion of their reported preparedness. This is supported by Festinger and Carlsmith's theory of cognitive dissonance (1959). Furthermore, the cluster analysis identified a conservative/liberal cluster, and the school policy attitudes questionnaire included in this survey did yield statistically significant correlations between questions items as well as between items and vignette questions. However, participant responses to the vignettes did not reflect the cluster or the associations. This raises the possibility that respondents were unintentionally distorting their answers based on social desirability rather than their actual practice methods. According to social desirability bias, individuals will provide socially appropriate responses (Leite & Cooper, 2010). This may explain why such high percentages of respondents in this study reported that they were familiar with and adhered to the ethics codes of NASP and APA, were adequately trained and prepared to address a variety of specific issues that could arise in therapy, and treated clients in a similar way regardless of the presenting dilemma

and individual nuances. It is possible that participants were stating how they *should* feel and act, or even how they would like to feel and act. The very definition of self-deception is that the deceived is unaware (Levy, 2004).

### **Limitations**

This study had a number of limitations. Because this was an online questionnaire, I was limited to individuals who are comfortable completing and responding to online surveys. The format of the survey (multiple choice and open-ended questions) may have affected the rate of completion as well. Respondents tended to stop responding to questions once they were presented with an open-ended question requiring them to type in an answer rather than just “click” on their choice. I also received emails from individuals who began the survey but stopped before completion; many of them stated that they found my demographic questions too personal or my vignettes unrealistic. These individuals are perhaps the very individuals who would have utilized motivated reasoning in responding to the vignette questions. In an effort to elicit a motivated reasoning response, I attempted to place individuals of particular ideologies in a defensive position. I had not considered that those individuals would simply stop completing the survey. This had an effect on the study by reducing my ability to examine those who reacted to the ideology questions.

The survey itself presented with limitations as well. The use of two open-ended questions after the vignettes allowed for a fuller understanding of participants' interpretation of the vignettes, but the different categories that emerged made comparisons across the vignettes impossible for those questions. The categorization process was a limitation as well. Another limitation was the relative uniformity of participants' responses. This limited the variation

among responses that would have allowed me to do further analyses to detect differences among groups of people.

The potential social desirability bias that emerged is yet another limitation to this study. This sample consisted of educated and professional psychologists who know what *should* be done in practice. Perhaps, they were reporting what they viewed as the most appropriate response, rather than reporting what they would actually do if they were faced with the hypothetical clients presented. The use of social desirability and motivated reasoning as a means of explaining participants' behavior is perhaps the study's largest limitation. Stating that participants are self-deceiving when they are responding in a way that is appropriate, and then stating that those individuals cannot truly defend themselves against that argument because, by definition, they would be unaware of the deception, is a circular argument. It is an argument that cannot be stated with certainty. It also raises the question of whether bias can ever be overcome. Can an individual ever be objective, in any situation? And, is that necessarily something that must be overcome?

**Response to Intervention.** Response to Intervention (RTI) played a large role in this study, though this was not the intended purpose. It was included as a vignette topic because RTI has become a large part of a school psychologist's role within schools, and I thought it would be a vignette psychologists could relate to. I did not realize people would react the way in which they did. This vignette was the subject of many negative comments, most of which stated that the child in the described vignette would never have spoken in such a manner regarding the IEP process (see Appendix F for the complete vignette). In fact, in my personal experience as a school psychologist, and after consulting with colleagues, children are aware of the IEP process. For young children, their knowledge is likely gleaned from overhearing conversations among

parents, teachers, and administrators regarding the testing process. In fact, some participants who responded to the vignette stated that the child must have overheard his parent or teacher talking, and they addressed this concern in their plan of action. While I do wish I would have made the child in the vignette be an older child (perhaps a child in middle school), I originally chose a second grade child because third grade is the first year in which standardized state testing is required, making second grade the year in which decisions regarding testing modifications and accommodations are made. Furthermore, this vignette, along with the entire questionnaire, was beta-tested prior to running the full study. While attempting to discern why the research sample of school-based psychologists was so upset by the vignette, while the beta sample did not have the same concerns, I realized that my beta sample were hospital and clinic-based school psychologists. This means that RTI does not affect them in the same way that it affects a school psychologist working within a school building. Allison and Upah (2006) clearly list five fears school-based psychologists are experiencing in relation to RTI. The five concerns they describe are as follows: (a) once RTI is established, school psychologists will lose their jobs, (b) the move from traditional roles will result in school psychologists being devalued, (c) involvement in the teaching and learning process will result in a loss of credibility and minimization of skills, (d) the RTI framework highlights instruction and learning rates, which is a teacher's role, not that of a school psychologist, and (e) the establishment of RTI will result in others being able to do the work of a school psychologist. When considering these fears, it is perhaps understandable that the study sample reacted the way they did.

My oversight as to the important role RTI would play in this study led to an additional limitation. A limitation of the pilot study was that I had not asked participants about their training history and their feelings of preparedness to address certain issues. This study aimed to

correct for that, and while I did ask participants about training and preparedness, I should have included a question on their awareness of Response to Intervention and their level of preparedness in that area. Although the vignette discussing RTI did not have sufficient data to yield quantitative results, understanding participants' exposure to RTI theory and models would have been beneficial. This is especially important as RTI is becoming more prevalent in school systems, and required in certain states, including New York.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Suggestions for future research address the limitations of this study and both expand and limit the current study. First, if I were to conduct this exact study again, I would make some important changes. In this study, I did not present the vignettes in random order, so I cannot say with absolute certainty that those who stopped completing the survey were offended at the vignette presented. They may have simply grown tired of survey completion. Also, randomizing the survey may have provided me with more data for the last two surveys. In this study, results needed to be interpreted with caution due to the percent of data missing.

Another change I would make to the present study relates to the actual questions. I would have fewer demographic questions, as some included in this study did not provide useful information (i.e., the journals and magazine that individuals read regularly). I would also include fewer open-ended questions. For the vignette section, I would adjust the plan of action question to require the school psychologists who choose to refer the student to another profession to specify which type of professional they are selecting. I would also add an additional vignette to serve as a foil to the sexuality vignette. Namely, I would have a conservative student with liberal parents who is experiencing conflict based on his more conservative views. Comparing participants' responses to the sexuality vignette and the conservative student vignette could

provide interesting results. Also, as mentioned above, I would include an RTI-related vignette as well.

While this study did not yield results that supported the hypotheses, it did indicate that the sample responded in a consistent way. Perhaps if individuals had been asked about their actual practices, rather than presented with hypothetical clients, they would have responded differently. Future research should attempt to recruit participants who report conducted hours of counseling at their places of employment. Participants should be questioned as to how many hours a week they dedicate to various responsibilities, and only those who conduct counseling should be included in the research sample. This would allow for actual reports of professional practice. Another option would be to conduct a field study. Seeing how psychologists react when presented with real clients in a real situation would remove the self-deception factor and the limitations of self-report, allowing for a better understanding of how psychologists truly behave.

Another change that can be implemented would be to actively recruit participants who work in schools, and then recruit participants who have private practices. Having two separate groups would allow for comparisons between groups. It would be interesting to compare the practices of participants in private practice, who have more leeway in deciding if they will take someone on as a client, to school psychologists who often get assigned a caseload regardless of their personal preferences.

There is also a need for a self-deception scale and social desirability scale that can accurately measure professional deception. Many of the scales that exist today seem transparent, especially to a population of professionals who administer standardized assessments frequently.

## Implications for School Psychologists

School psychologists spend much of their time interacting with individuals whose beliefs may differ widely from their own. Ethical standards mandate that school psychologists (a) be aware of their biases and, (b) work to eliminate them. According to APA, both steps are required. The conscience clause, i.e., the legal right of a health care provider to opt out of providing services due to religious or conscientious conflict, has been passed for mental health providers in Arizona and is proposed legislation in two other states. APA has taken a direct stance against this development. In a recent article in the *APA Monitor* (Clay, 2013), the dangers of invoking the conscience clause was clearly described. When psychologists recognize bias, but choose to not attempt to eliminate bias, it results in a direct violation of APA's Ethical Principles and the Code of Conduct. While a professional in private practice has the right to choose to whom he or she feels comfortable providing services, the conscience clause has been successfully invoked by students who cite their right to free speech and freedom of religion when challenged by their training programs regarding their refusal to work with particular clients. Clay (2013) indicates that this has significant implications for both training programs and their students. When *students* refuse to work with particular populations, they are limiting access to public services through their practical clinic work and avoiding increasing their cultural competency. The training programs, in turn, are graduating classes that are not fully trained, and in certain areas, are ill prepared. For this reason APA is providing guidelines to assist programs in navigating the conflicts that emerge between psychologists' commitment to provide services and students' personal beliefs (APA, 2012). These guidelines include a commitment to a training environment that promotes competencies in areas that have been determined to help the general public and the inability for trainees to select which competencies they deem important to the field of

psychology. It also includes full disclosure by the training programs regarding what is expected of trainees, as well as the commitment of the training programs to assisting the diverse population. The third guideline reiterates the commitment of APA to adhere to the Ethics Code as well as Practice Standards to require training programs to ensure full competency among its graduates to serve a diverse population.

I conducted this study in an attempt to determine if, in spite of best efforts, and perhaps unbeknownst to themselves, many school psychologists have difficulty separating their personal ideologies from their professional practice. The implication for school psychologists, based on the face value of how they would have handled the cases presented, is that these school psychologists focused on the distress the presenting client faced, and work to reduce that distress. This is not to say that bias does not exist. It simply means that practicing school psychologists, who are individuals choosing to work with and help other people, know that they should look past ideology and bias in order to assist those in need. Much as an emergency room doctor must address the medical needs of all those who come through the doors. Regardless of the patient's personal background, behavior, or beliefs, a psychologist, particularly one who practices in schools, must address the social and emotional needs of every student who walks through the door of his or her office. However, these were hypothetical situations. Participants' responses to the vignette related to Response to Intervention indicate that there are strong feelings on that subject. Additionally, their responses to the school policy attitudes were not necessarily consistent with their vignette responses. These results indicate that psychologists need to continue to address and attempt to overcome their biases.

In an effort to reduce bias, training programs must continue to provide psychologists with courses and guidelines to address individuals from all walks of life. Multicultural classes are a

part of most graduate school coursework. Gender and religion could perhaps be integrated within the required courses. Training programs must continue to provide psychologists with the appropriate tools to address challenges of opposing ideologies in practice. Psychologists must continue to be consciously aware of their levels of expertise, or lack thereof, in different areas of practice, and ensure that bias does not play a role in practice by maintaining a knowledge of themselves.

Self-deception may have played a role in the results of this study, and future research will continue to determine if psychologists are prone to self-deception and motivated reasoning. At the very least, the outcome of this research is the knowledge that psychologists are aware of appropriate practices. That awareness makes it possible for them to apply best practices to their day to day interactions with students and clients.

## **APPENDIX A Information Page**

My name is Michelle Klein Brenner, and I am a doctoral candidate in School Psychology in the Ph.D. Program in the Educational Psychology at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY). I am seeking participants for a research project. The aim of this work is to examine decision making in school-based counseling. I am the Principal Investigator of this project, which is my dissertation.

Participation in this study involves completing an online questionnaire, which takes about 20 minutes. The link to the online survey is provided at the end of this message. There are no risks to you in taking part in this study. You do not have to provide your name or any other identifying information. Participation is voluntary. You can choose not to complete the questionnaire, and you can stop participation at any time.

If you would like a copy of the results of this study, please email me your address, and I will send you a copy in the future. In addition, if you choose to complete the study, you may submit your email address at the end of the questionnaire to be entered into a drawing to receive 1 of 3 \$25 American Express gift cards. Please know that email addresses for both the results and the drawing will not be tied to your questionnaire responses in any way.

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact me at [mbrenner@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:mbrenner@gc.cuny.edu), or either of my research advisors, Georgiana Shick Tryon, at [gtryon@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:gtryon@gc.cuny.edu); Jay Verkuilen, at [jverkuilen@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:jverkuilen@gc.cuny.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Kay Powell, IRB Administrator, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, (212) 817-7525, [kpowell@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:kpowell@gc.cuny.edu).

Thank you in advance for your participation in the study.

Michelle K. Brenner  
Doctoral Candidate

**APPENDIX B**  
**Screening Question**

1. Are you currently a practicing psychologist?

Yes

No, I do not practice

No, I am a student

### Appendix C Demographic Questions

2. What is your age?

Less than 25 years

25-35 years

36-45 years

46-55 years

56- 65 years

66-75 years

76+ years

3. What your gender?

Male

Female

Other

4. What is your race/ethnicity?

Asian or Pacific Islander

African American (not of Hispanic origin)

Hispanic

Native American or Alaskan Native

Caucasian (not of Hispanic origin)

Other, please specify

5. What is your highest degree?

PhD

PsyD

EdD

MSEd

Other

6. What is the name of the school from which you received your highest degree?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the name of school from which you received your undergraduate degree?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. In what setting do you practice? Check all that apply.

Public school

Private school

Private practice

Hospital

Other, please specify

9. How long have you been practicing? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Which theoretical orientation do you endorse?  
Behavioral  
Cognitive  
Cognitive-behavioral  
Eclectic  
Psychodynamic  
Systems  
Feminism  
Other, please specify
11. Do you consider yourself religious?  
Yes  
No
12. IF YES to question 11: what is your religious affiliation? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you consider yourself spiritual?  
Yes  
No
14. Which political party do you endorse or identify with?  
Democratic  
Independent  
Republican  
Other, please specify  
None
15. Are you a member of the American Psychological Association?  
Yes  
No
16. (If YES to question 15):  
Which APA divisions do you belong to? Please check all that apply.
- None  
APA Division 1: Society for General Psychology  
APA Division 2: Society for the Teaching of Psychology  
APA Division 3: Experimental Psychology  
APA Division 5: Evaluation, Measurement, and Statistics  
APA Division 6: Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology  
APA Division 7: Developmental Psychology  
APA Division 8: Society for Personality and Social Psychology  
APA Division 9: Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues

- APA Division 10: Society for the Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts
- APA Division 12: Society of Clinical Psychology
- APA Division 13: Society of Consulting Psychology
- APA Division 14: Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology
- APA Division 15: Educational Psychology
- APA Division 16: School Psychology
- APA Division 17: Society of Counseling Psychology
- APA Division 18: Psychologists in Public Service
- APA Division 19: Society for Military Psychology
- APA Division 20: Adult Development and Aging
- APA Division 21: Applied Experimental and Engineering Psychology
- APA Division 22: Rehabilitation Psychology
- APA Division 23: Society for Consumer Psychology
- APA Division 24: Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology
- APA Division 25: Behavior Analysis
- APA Division 26: Society for the History of Psychology
- APA Division 27: Society for Community Research and Action: Division of Community Psychology
- APA Division 28: Psychopharmacology and Substance Abuse
- APA Division 29: Psychotherapy
- APA Division 30: Society of Psychological Hypnosis
- APA Division 31: State, Provincial, and Territorial Psychological Association Affairs
- APA Division 32: Society for Humanistic Psychology
- APA Division 33: Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- APA Division 34: Society for Environmental, Population and Conservation Psychology
- APA Division 35: Society for the Psychology of Women
- APA Division 36: Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality
- APA Division 37: Society for Child and Family Policy and Practice
- APA Division 38: Health Psychology
- APA Division 39: Psychoanalysis
- APA Division 40: Clinical Neuropsychology
- APA Division 41: American Psychology-Law Society
- APA Division 42: Psychologists in Independent Practice
- APA Division 43: Society for Family Psychology
- APA Division 44: Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues
- APA Division 45: Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues
- APA Division 46: Media Psychology
- APA Division 47: Exercise and Sport Psychology
- APA Division 48: Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence: Peace Psychology Division
- APA Division 49: Society of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy
- APA Division 50: Society of Addiction Psychology
- APA Division 51: Society for the Psychological Study of Men and Masculinity
- APA Division 52: International Psychology
- APA Division 53: Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology

APA Division 54: Society of Pediatric Psychology  
 APA Division 55: American Society for the Advancement of Pharmacotherapy  
 APA Division 56: Trauma Psychology

17. Are you a member of the National Association for School Psychologists?

Yes  
 No

18. (If YES to number 17): Which of the following NASP Special Interest Groups do you belong to?

None  
 Other, Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Adoption & Foster Care  
 Autism & Pervasive Developmental Disorders  
 Behavioral School Psychology  
 Bilingual School Psychology  
 Computer & Technical Applications in School Psychology  
 Consultee-Centered Consultation  
 Crisis Management in the Schools  
 Early Childhood Education  
 Gifted/Talented  
 Military Families  
 Neuropsychology in the Schools  
 Pediatric School Psychology  
 Positive School Psychology  
 Prevention and Promotion of Psychological Wellness  
 Reading  
 Response to Intervention  
 Retirement  
 Rural School Psychology  
 School Psychologists in Virtual Settings  
 School Psychologists Working With Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing  
 Social Justice  
 State School Psychology Consultants  
 Supervision  
 Systems Level Data-Driven Decision-Making  
 Traumatic Brain Injury  
 Urban School Psychology

19. What APA or NASP journals, newspapers, or magazines do you read regularly? Please check all that apply.

None

Other, Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_

American Psychologist  
 Asian American Journal of Psychology  
 Behavioral Neuroscience  
 Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science  
 Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology  
 Canadian Psychology  
 Clinician's Research Digest: Briefings in Behavioral Science  
 Communique  
 Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research  
 Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books  
 Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice  
 Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology  
 Developmental Psychology  
 Dreaming  
 Emotion  
 Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology  
 Families, Systems, & Health  
 Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice  
 Health Psychology  
 History of Psychology  
 International Journal of Play Therapy  
 International Journal of Stress Management  
 International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation  
 Journal of Abnormal Psychology  
 Journal of Applied Psychology  
 Journal of Comparative Psychology  
 Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology  
 Journal of Counseling Psychology  
 Journal of Diversity in Higher Education  
 Journal of Educational Psychology  
 Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes  
 Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied  
 Journal of Experimental Psychology: General  
 Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance  
 Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition  
 Journal of Family Psychology  
 Journal of Latina/o Psychology  
 Journal of Neuroscience, Psychology, and Economics  
 Journal of Occupational Health Psychology  
 Journal of Personality and Social Psychology  
 Journal of Psychotherapy Integration  
 Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology  
 Law and Human Behavior  
 Neuropsychology

Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology  
 Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment  
 Professional Psychology: Research and Practice  
 Psychoanalytic Psychology  
 Psychological Assessment  
 Psychological Bulletin  
 Psychological Methods  
 Psychological Review  
 Psychological Services  
 Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy  
 Psychology and Aging  
 Psychology of Addictive Behaviors  
 Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts  
 Psychology of Men & Masculinity  
 Psychology of Popular Media Culture  
 Psychology of Religion and Spirituality  
 Psychology of Violence  
 Psychology, Public Policy, and Law  
 Psychomusicology: Music, Mind, and Brain  
 Psychotherapy  
 Rehabilitation Psychology  
 Review of General Psychology  
 School Psychology Quarterly  
 Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology  
 Training and Education in Professional Psychology

20. What other journals, newspapers, or magazines (professional or otherwise) do you read regularly?

---

21. Which of the following special interest groups (SIG) do you belong to? Please check all that apply.

None

Other, Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_

American Association of Christian Counselors

American Civil Liberties Union

American Federation of Teachers

American Humane Society

Americans for Prosperity

Campaign for a Color Blind America

Catholic Families for America

Christian Counseling Today

Christian Voice

Combat Veterans for Congress

Consumer Federation of America  
Environment America  
Federation for American Immigration Reform  
Financial Executives International  
Home School Legal Defense Association  
National Farmers Union  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
National Rifle Association  
National Right to Life Committee  
National Taxpayers Union  
Planned Parenthood  
Sierra Club  
Traditional Values Coalition

22. Are there any organizations or special interest groups that you would like to belong to?

Yes, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

No

**Appendix D**  
**Training and Preparedness Questions**

23. In your graduate studies, did you take a course specifically related to any of the following topics?

- |                         |     |    |
|-------------------------|-----|----|
| a. multicultural issues | YES | NO |
| b. Gender stereotypes   | YES | NO |
| c. Religion             | YES | NO |
| d. Ethics               | YES | NO |

24. Please indicate how prepared you felt *upon graduation* to address the following issues in professional practice.

	Very Prepared	Mostly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Minimally Prepared	Unprepared
Multicultural Issues					
Gender stereotypes					
Religion					
Ethics					

25. Please indicate how able you feel to address the following issues today.

	Very Prepared	Mostly Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Minimally Prepared	Unprepared
Multicultural Issues					
Gender stereotypes					
Religion					
Ethics					

26. Please indicate when you last took a course or workshop related to any of the following topics.

	Within the last year	Within the last 1 to 5 years	6-10 years ago	More than 10 years ago	Never
Culture and Diversity					

Gender					
Religion					
Ethics					

27. How familiar are you with the NASP or APA Ethics Code?

Very familiar

Mostly Familiar

Familiar

Somewhat familiar

Unfamiliar

28. Do you always adhere to the NASP or APA Ethics Code?

Yes

No

**Appendix E**  
**Self-Deception Survey**

29. Would you support a school policy that:

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| • Implemented a 12-month school year  | YES | NO |
| • Promoted abstinence education   | YES | NO |
| • Instituted a brief prayer after morning announcements                                     | YES | NO |
| • Allowed girls to try out for boys' sporting teams   | YES | NO |
| • Removed evolution from the curriculum   | YES | NO |
| • Required teachers to document intervention efforts before making academic referrals       | YES | NO |
| • Created a gender neutral bathroom   | YES | NO |
| • Encouraged peer-led mediation sessions among students                                     | YES | NO |
| • Mandated that students sign an anti-bullying pledge                                       | YES | NO |
| • Gave parents a choice between volunteering hours of service to the school or paying a fee | YES | NO |
| • Removed the phrase "under God" from the pledge of allegiance                              | YES | NO |
| • Separated boys and girls for academic classes   | YES | NO |

## **Appendix F Vignette Questions**

### **Vignette # 1**

John Davis is a seventh grade student who has recently transferred to your school. His recent transfer happened when his family moved as a result of his father finding a job nearby; his father is an accountant and his mother is a stay at home mom. John's performance in school is average and he is of average height and weight. John has a noticeable speech delay and, as a result, has an Individualized Education Plan entitling him to three 30 minute sessions of speech and language therapy weekly. John does not have a history of socialization difficulties, but he has only made few friends at this school. Today John comes to see you; he is frustrated and exclaims, "People probably don't want to be friends with me because of how I talk! At my old school I had more speech therapy and more friends!" Although John is mandated to receive three sessions of speech per week, the school's speech therapist only works two days a week. John is missing 30 minutes of therapy a week.

- 1. Would you:
  - a. See this client on a continuous basis**
  - b. See this client for a second preliminary session**
  - c. Send this client for an assessment**
  - d. Refer this client to another professional****
  
- 2. Please explain your reasoning for your response to question 1.**
  
- 3. IF RESPONDED A or B to QUESTION 1: What are your goals for this client?**
  
  
- 4. Are there any school policies related to your decision regarding what you would do for this client. If so, please describe.**

**Vignette #2**

David Miller is a junior in high school. He is doing well academically and is active and successful on both the school's debate team and drama club. David has the lead in the school's spring musical, even though he is a junior and the role normally goes to a senior. He is also one of the only openly gay students at your school and is the president of the Gay-Straight Alliance. In the past, David has told you that in spite of the GSA, he feels lonely and different from his male friends. Since beginning to date Jonathan, another student, David's feelings of loneliness have diminished. He has been happier and more confident. Today, David comes in upset. He and Jonathan had planned on attending Junior Prom together and have specifically been told by the principal to refrain from "inappropriate physical interactions" during the prom. "Why can't Jonathan and I be just like everyone else? We should be able to have fun, and dance, and kiss just like any other couple? There's nothing wrong with us! When we graduate we can get married, have kids, and be a regular family, so why are we treated differently in high school? Even the president thinks we should be treated the same!"

- 1. Would you:**
  - a. See this client on a continuous basis**
  - b. See this client for a second preliminary session**
  - c. Send this client for an assessment**
  - d. Refer this client to another professional**
  
- 2. Please explain your reasoning for your response to question 1.**
  
- 3. IF RESPONDED A or B to QUESTION 1: What are your goals for this client?**
  
- 4. Are there any school policies related to your decision regarding what you would do for this client. If so, please describe.**

**Vignette #3**

Jodi Dailey is a freshman and the second of four children. Her father is a successful radiologist and her mother is his receptionist. Jodi's older brother is a junior in your school and at the top of his class. Jodi is an average student, but she is struggling in math. Recently, she stopped attending her math class. When you bring up her recent math difficulties and truancy, Jodi shrugs and shouts, "So I won't be an engineer! It's not like I'm failing language arts. Like my dad says, math and science are subjects for boys anyway. The guy on the radio is right! America has too many overeducated single girls! And I do not want to be single!"

1. **Would you:**
  - a. **See this client on a continuous basis**
  - b. **See this client for a second preliminary session**
  - c. **Send this client for an assessment**
  - d. **Refer this client to another professional**
  
2. **Please explain your reasoning for your response to question 1.**
  
3. **IF RESPONDED A or B to QUESTION 1: What are your goals for this client?**
  
4. **Are there any school policies related to your decision regarding what you would do for this client. If so, please describe.**

**Vignette #4**

Christopher Harris is a second grade student. His grades in both reading and math have been slightly below average since the first grade. Christopher's older sister, Jennifer, is a student in your school as well; she is a member of the fifth grade Integrated Co-Teaching classroom, consisting of children with and without Individualized Education Programs (IEP). The class has a general education teacher as well as a special education teacher. Recently, based on classroom assessments, Christopher has begun receiving Academic Intervention Services (AIS) in reading. Today, Christopher comes in upset and says, "I'm never going to be good at reading and AIS isn't helping! Why can't you just test me so I can get an IEP like Jennifer already?! I need extra time for the state exams next year!"

- 1. Would you:**
  - a. See this client on a continuous basis**
  - b. See this client for a second preliminary session**
  - c. Send this client for an assessment**
  - d. Refer this client to another professional**
  
- 2. Please explain your reasoning for your response to question 1.**
  
- 3. IF RESPONDED A or B to QUESTION 1: What are your goals for this client?**
  
  
- 4. Are there any school policies related to your decision regarding what you would do for this client. If so, please describe.**

**Vignette #5**

Gabriella Lopez is a senior. She is an above average student who is on the yearbook committee. Gabriella takes ballet classes every day after school and often comes to session with her blond hair in a tightly wound bun. She is an accomplished dancer who has applied to a competitive ballet school and aspires to perform professionally. Gabriella has been raised by her mother and stepfather, both of whom are Caucasian. She has not seen her biological father for over ten years. Gabriella is upset today because the principal has nominated her for an award reserved for Hispanic students. Gabriella tells you she considers the nomination degrading, and says, “The only part of me that’s Lopez ran out on my mom and me. Just because my last name is Lopez, does not mean I am one of those people! And you should tell the principal that I am changing my last name the minute I turn 18!”

- 1. Would you:**
  - a. See this client on a continuous basis**
  - b. See this client for a second preliminary session**
  - c. Send this client for an assessment**
  - d. Refer this client to another professional**
  
- 2. Please explain your reasoning for your response to question 1.**
  
- 3. IF RESPONDED A or B to QUESTION 1: What are your goals for this client?**
  
- 4. Are there any school policies related to your decision regarding what you would do for this client. If so, please describe.**

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