

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Examining Counseling and Psychology Trainees Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Towards Trans Men and Trans Women

STUDENT: Tauralee J. Tenn

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy

COLLEGE: Teachers College

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The current study examined counseling and psychology trainees implicit *and* explicit attitudes towards trans men and trans women based on trainees' self-identified gender, sexual orientation, and religiosity (as measured by spiritual support and spiritual openness). Participants ($n = 174$) included master's and doctoral level students across counseling and psychology disciplines. Participants were recruited through non-probability Purposive sampling and invited to complete an online survey in Qualtrics at their discretion. Controlling for social desirability, a Multivariate Multiple Regression analysis indicated spiritual support was the strongest predictor of attitudes followed by sexual orientation, spiritual openness, and then status as a cisgender male or female.

In this study, low openness and high support were associated with more anti-trans attitudes towards trans men and women at the explicit level as well as implicit preference towards trans men, but only among trainees who endorsed high spiritual support. With regards to gender, cis male trainees showed more explicit preference towards cis men and women, while cis female and gender-expansive trainees yielded more explicit preference towards trans men and women. However implicitly, trainee gender did not account for statistically significant

differences in attitudes towards either gender identity comparison group. Finally, trainees who identified as heterosexual held explicit preference towards cis men and surprisingly, held implicit preference towards trans women. Conversely, non-heterosexual trainees held explicit preference towards trans men and implicit preference towards cis women.

Overall, this study provides evidence that counseling and psychology trainees may hold different attitudes, at the explicit and implicit level, towards trans men and women. Additionally, despite conscious endorsement of positive attitudes towards trans men and/or women, anti-trans attitudes may be difficult to overcome given how deeply they may be engrained in the human psyche. Implications for future research, policies and practice are discussed.