

## Counselor Educator Cody J. Helgesen Advances Inclusive, Trauma-Informed Mental Health Care Through Research Practice

Licensed Professional Counselor and Doctoral Candidate Champions LGBTQ+ Affirming Therapy, Social Justice, and Neurodiversity-Informed Mental Health Care



**Fairfield, Connecticut Jun 24, 2026** ([Issuewire.com](http://Issuewire.com)) - Cody J. Helgesen, LPC, NCC, is helping shape the future of counseling through a career defined by clinical excellence, counselor education, research innovation, and advocacy for historically marginalized communities. As a licensed professional counselor, nationally certified counselor, educator, and doctoral candidate, Cody has dedicated their

professional life to fostering inclusive, affirming, and trauma-informed mental health care while preparing the next generation of counselors to serve diverse populations with competence and compassion.

Currently pursuing a Doctor of Education (EdD) in Counselor Education and Supervision at Southern Connecticut State University, with anticipated completion in August 2026, Cody's scholarly work explores the intersections of queerness, sexuality, and older adulthood. Their research reflects a broader commitment to advancing conversations around identity, liberation, and equity within both counseling practice and counselor education.

Cody earned a Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Southern Connecticut State University, graduating summa cum laude, and previously completed a Bachelor of Arts in Psychological Science and Human Development & Family Sciences at the University of Connecticut. Their academic foundation combines developmental psychology, counseling theory, multicultural competence, and trauma-informed care, all of which continue to inform their professional work today.

In higher education, Cody has established themselves as an engaging and socially conscious educator. They have served as an instructor of record, co-instructor, and teaching assistant at both Fairfield University and Southern Connecticut State University, teaching graduate-level courses including Counseling Skills and Techniques, Sexual Issues in Counseling, Developmental Psychopathology, Crisis Counseling, and Theories of Counseling. Through experiential learning strategies and social justice-centered pedagogy, Cody equips both school and clinical mental health counselors-in-training with the tools necessary to work effectively with clients and students from diverse backgrounds and life experiences.

Beyond the classroom, Cody has accumulated extensive clinical experience across outpatient mental health settings, residential treatment programs, and school-based services. Their work has included supporting adolescents, adults, neurodivergent individuals, and members of the LGBTQ+ community in a variety of counseling environments. Throughout these roles, they have emphasized strengths-based interventions, trauma-informed treatment, and identity-affirming approaches that honor clients' lived experiences while fostering resilience and growth.

Cody's specialized expertise is reinforced by numerous professional credentials and certifications, including Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), National Certified Counselor (NCC), Certified Clinical Trauma Professional (CCTP), Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinical Specialist (ASDCS), Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM), Psychological First Aid, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI), and CPR/AED certification. These credentials support an integrative clinical approach grounded in evidence-based practice and responsive care.

A respected voice within the counseling profession, Cody actively contributes to research, presentations, and professional service at regional, national, and international levels. Their presentations have been featured at conferences hosted by organizations such as the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA), the American Counseling Association (ACA), Counselors for Social Justice, and the Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (SAIGE).

Among their notable scholarly works are collaborative co-facilitated oral and poster presentations addressing topics such as queer identity development, sex-positive counseling, neurodiversity, and decolonizing counseling practices. Titles include *Dear Cis Het Counselors...*, *Decolonizing Self-Care Discourses in Counseling*, *Ethical Non-Monogamy and Those Left Out: Older Adults and*

*Adolescents, Spicy and Fabulous: ADHD and Queer Identity Development*, and *Still Here, Still Queer, Still Sexy AF: Sex-Positive Counseling with Older Queer Adults*. Cody has also contributed to manuscript projects spearheaded by their advisor and mentor, Dr. Laurie Bonjo, that focus on non-monosexual identities, transgender and nonbinary group counseling, and queer-competent counselor training.

Their contributions to the profession have earned significant recognition, including the AMHCA Emerging Professional of the Year Award for 2021–2022 and the AMHCA Mental Health Counselor of the Year Award in 2024. These honors reflect not only their professional accomplishments but also their dedication to advancing ethical and equitable mental health care.

In addition to clinical and academic work, Cody remains deeply committed to service and advocacy. Their volunteer efforts include participation in Relay for Life, LGBTQ+ Safe Zone training initiatives, professional mentorship of counseling students and emerging clinicians, admissions committee service, and public education through lectures and webinars addressing LGBTQ+ mental health, trauma-informed care, and neurodiversity.

For Cody, the most meaningful aspect of counseling is witnessing the gradual, often unnoticed progress clients make in their daily lives.

“What I enjoy most about my work is the small, often subtle wins that clients may not always notice in themselves,” Helgesen said. “Seeing someone begin to challenge self-criticism, recognize unhelpful patterns, and embrace their humanity is incredibly meaningful. I value helping people understand that while life can be difficult, support and connection make those challenges easier to navigate.”

### **Learn more about Cody Helgesen:**

Through their America’s Best in Medicine profile, <https://americasbestinmedicine.com/connect/cody-helgesen>

### **America’s Best in Medicine**

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