

PRESS RELEASE

NBCC Foundation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NBCC Foundation Appoints Inaugural Minority Fellowship Program Advisory Council

Greensboro, NC— With funding from two additional federal grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) is expanding its ability to reduce mental health disparities by establishing master's-level education awards for counselors-in-training committed to meeting the mental health and substance abuse needs of transition-age (16–25) minority youth. The NBCC MFP will accomplish this by awarding up to 80 master's fellowships each year. NBCC has contracted the NBCC Foundation to administer the two new federal grants. The Foundation recently appointed the inaugural NBCC Minority Fellowship Program Master's Advisory Council. The members of the inaugural council are Dr. Ajita Robinson, Dr. Walter Swingler and Christopher Townsend.



Dr. Ajita Robinson

Dr. Walter Swingler

Christopher Townsend

Ajita M. Robinson earned a doctorate in counseling from the George Washington University in D.C. She holds a Master of Arts in counseling and human development, a Bachelor of Science in business administration, and a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Saint Louis University in Missouri. Robinson is a licensed clinical professional counselor in the state of Maryland and a National Certified Counselor. She is the founder and lead clinician at Friends in Transition Counseling, LLC. Although Robinson works with individuals and families experiencing varied mental health concerns, she specializes in grief and loss, life transitions, and neurodevelopmental disabilities. She is also a visiting assistant professor in the pastoral counseling department at Loyola University Maryland. Robinson has spent much of her career examining the needs of and working with children, adolescents and families adversely impacted by trauma, poverty, substance abuse and other chronic stressors. Her research focuses on factors that impact well-being among African-American youth in urban public housing, particularly those with histories of trauma. Robinson was selected as an NBCC Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) Fellow in the program's inaugural year and currently serves on the MFP Advisory Council. She is also a mentor to youth in foster care through the YMCA Silver Spring, Maryland.

Walter L. Swingler, of Los Angeles, California, earned a doctorate in counseling psychology and a master's degree in criminal and social psychology from California State University. He also earned a Doctor of Ministry degree in ethnic and community studies from Biola University's Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California. Swingler has an extensive military career that encompasses campaigns from Vietnam to Iraq, from 1973 to 2013. He has held positions of staff logistics officer and warranted logistician for the U.S. Army. Swingler's civil service career includes the positions of special agent for U.S. Customs and Defense Investigative Service, criminal and social psychologist for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in Los Angeles, clinical coordinator of a VA methadone clinic, and clinical director of the U.S. VETS Westside Residence Hall. He has extensive experience working with homeless and incarcerated veterans in a number of programs. Swingler is a National Certified Counselor, a Master Addictions Counselor and an Approved Clinical Supervisor.

Christopher Townsend, of High Point, North Carolina, is currently a doctoral student in the rehabilitation counseling and rehabilitation counselor education program at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro. His research interest is in the area of complex trauma. He holds an M.A. in community counseling and a B.S. from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Townsend is a National Certified Counselor and a licensed professional counselor, licensed clinical addictions specialist and certified clinical supervisor in North Carolina. He provides counseling services to children and adults with mental health, substance abuse and trauma symptoms. Townsend is a national and international trainer on various mental health, trauma and substance abuse topics, including NBCC International's Mental Health Facilitator (MHF) model.

In partnership with the Foundation staff, the Minority Fellowship Program Master's Advisory Council will select and support Fellows; create policy related to the administration of the program; support program planning, monitoring and evaluation; and provide education and leadership to the counseling profession.

About the NBCC Foundation

The NBCC Foundation is the philanthropic affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), based in Greensboro, North Carolina. NBCC is the nation's premier professional certification board devoted to credentialing counselors who meet standards for the general and specialty practices of professional counseling. Currently, there are more than 55,000 National Certified Counselors (NCCs) in the United States and more than 50 countries. The Foundation's mission is to leverage the power of counseling by strategically focusing resources for positive change.

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