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Original Research

Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Students' Understanding and Experiences of Counseling: A Qualitative Pilot Study

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Abstract: Integrating counseling education and training in speech-language pathology (SLP) and audiology programs is crucial to ensure comprehensive and effective patient care by students. In counseling education, students learn to guide patients and their families through the emotional and psychological impacts of communication disorders, ensuring holistic support. Located in a South African context, this pilot study explored how SLP and audiology students understood and experienced counseling with patients living with communication disorders and their families. A self-developed questionnaire was utilized to collect data from students registered in SLP and audiology programs, respectively. Using thematic analysis, the findings indicated that students understood counseling as the provision of educational information and adjustment support and that they faced several challenges when providing counseling (i.e., difficulties in applying counseling knowledge in practice and content recall, lack of confidence, and lack of practice). This study highlights considerations to be made for improving the counseling module taught in the university's SLP and audiology programs.

Keywords: *Counseling, Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology, Students, Patients*

Introduction

Counseling forms an integral part of the comprehensive services offered by speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists. By incorporating counseling into practice, SLPs and audiologists can address the various psychosocial dimensions of the patient's life that are impacted by their diagnoses and the rehabilitation process. The South African Speech-Language-Hearing Association (SASLHA) (2010) acknowledges the importance of counseling in intervention to assist patients in developing a profound understanding of communication disorders and their effects. By providing counseling, patients may accept the limitations that the communication disorders impose on their activities and social involvement while also establishing realistic expectations for the intervention's outcomes. However, despite its significance, the literature suggests that many SLPs and audiologists encounter challenges when it comes to integrating and applying counseling techniques during intervention sessions (Dawood, Khan, and Bagwandin 2019). These difficulties stem from several factors, such as a lack of counseling theory training, uneasiness with applying counseling techniques, poor confidence in offering counseling during the clinical

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intervention, and the stigmas or perceived boundaries surrounding counseling and intervention for communication disorders (Doud, Hoepner, and Holland 2020; Lanzi, Ellison, and Cohen 2021). Meibos, Muñoz, and Twohig (2019) believe that special attention must be brought to counseling and how it is described within the profession in order to solve the problems faced by SLPs and audiologists and improve the overall quality of care for patients and their families. The focus of this research is on aspiring SLPs and audiologists. It is contended that since they will eventually make up the workforce for both professions and be in charge of giving clinical treatment to people with communication difficulties, they deserve significant attention. This study identifies and describes the counseling gaps or problems that students have in the early stages of their clinical training and expertise. By addressing these concerns through focused training programs, the institution can guarantee that aspiring professionals are capable of effectively incorporating counseling into their work. Additionally, because the students are actively participating in the learning process, their new perspectives offer a chance to record their distinctive insights. This research will ultimately affect the quality of care given to patients and their families in the long run by improving training programs and enhancing students' professional growth.

Literature Review

Within the South African context, SLPs and audiologists provide specialized services in the special education sector, the healthcare sector, and residential and non-residential care facilities for people living with speech, fluency, language, voice, and hearing challenges (Kanji et al. 2018; Khoza-Shangase and Mophosho 2018; Pillay et al. 2020). In many contextual settings, these professionals play a crucial role in providing support to individuals and their families who are marginalized as a result of communication disorders or communication issues (Pillay et al. 2020; Ukstins and Welling 2017). Specifically, SLPs have particular responsibilities, encompassing the assessing and remediation of speech, language, and communication challenges across the lifespan. Employing therapeutic approaches and intervention strategies, SLPs address the diverse needs of individuals. Additionally, SLPs undertake the management of individuals facing swallowing disabilities. In contrast, audiologists focus on the prevention, identification, assessment, and rehabilitation of individuals grappling with hearing impairment, as articulated by Ukstins and Welling (2017). Audiologists specialize primarily in the comprehensive care of individuals experiencing hearing impairments along with other auditory system disorders such as balance disorders and tinnitus. Their distinct expertise is essential in enhancing the well-being of patients facing communication difficulties and for comprehensive understanding and treatment of patients' needs. Overall, due to their emphasis on patients' communication skills, a basic human need that is critical to one's health and well-being, SLPs and audiologists play a critical role in the healthcare industry.

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Consequently, an impairment in an individual's communication abilities can have far-reaching effects, potentially on their mental health, social relationships, self-esteem, and self-confidence (Palmer, Newsom, and Rook 2016). In this paper, impairment is viewed as a loss of ability, which may be argued to cause episodic grief (Friehe, Bloedow, and Hesse 2003). Episodic grief is a distinct sort of grieving experience characterized by recurrent, intense feelings of sadness that are frequently brought on by specific occurrences or memories of the loss. According to Palmer, Newsom, and Rook (2016), individuals who are diagnosed with and have communication impairments frequently experience a range of emotional responses, such as grief, rage, longing, or other loss-related emotions. These episodes can be triggered by various factors, such as anniversaries, birthdays, and holidays, or by encountering reminders of the loss itself. The emotional intensity experienced during these episodes can be overwhelming and may temporarily disrupt the daily functioning and well-being of the patients and their families (Schultz et al. 2022). Due to the impact of communication impairments and these experiences of grief, SLPs and audiologists have a role in supporting patients and their families to adjust to the impairment through counseling (Simmons-Mackie and Damico 2011).

Counseling in speech-language pathology (SLP) and audiology refers to the "interactions related to emotional reactions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that result from living with the communication disorder, feeding and swallowing disorder, or related disorders" (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [ASHA] 2016, 9). Thomas, Ravi, and Gunjawate (2023) posit that counseling involves providing advice, opinions, or recommendations regarding decisions and deliberating on future options. In contrast, Holland and Nelson (2018) characterize counseling as an attentive process in which SLPs and audiologists strive to comprehend clients' perspectives, encourage expressive communication, and assist individuals in translating information into actions that are both satisfying and successful. Counseling plays a vital role in the services offered to patients with communication impairments because it gives the patients the tools that they need to solve problems on their own, feel in control of their lives and identities, and learn new coping and adjustment techniques (Riley 2002).

Counseling in SLP and audiology is discussed under two approaches or areas, namely, information counseling and adjustment counseling (also referred to as adjustment support or rehabilitation counseling). Informational counseling involves educating patients and families about the effects of speech and hearing loss, the use of amplification or other technologies for treatment such as a speech device, and the functioning of these technologies (Flasher and Fogle 2012; Meibos et al. 2017). Additionally, it includes explaining the nature of the disorder, assessment results, treatment plans, prognoses, and available resources (Stuvert, Gunjawate, and Ravi 2022). Adjustment counseling focuses on addressing the ideas, attitudes, emotions, beliefs, and thoughts of both the client and their family members (Holland and Nelson 2018).

Similar to the work done by Holland and Nelson (2018) and Phillips and Mendel (2008), this study argues that it is imperative for SLPs and audiologists to not only comprehend the physiological and anatomical effects of communication disorders but also recognize the

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profound psychosocial impact of the impairment on patients and their families. Moreover, counseling should focus on assisting patients in coping and adjusting to lives that have been altered by communication impairment (Simmons-Mackie and Damico 2011). By providing counseling, SLPs and audiologists contribute to patients and their families' understanding, acceptance, and adjustment to the challenges posed by communication impairments (Dawood, Khan, and Bagwandin 2019; Meibos, Muñoz, and Twohig 2019), particularly as the impairment may adversely affect self-concept, self-efficacy, and personal relationships and interactions (Ratanjee-Vanmali and Joseph 2015).

Literature highlights existing challenges faced by SLPs and audiologists when it comes to implementing counseling in their intervention with patients and their families, including the lack of competence and discomfort in providing counseling. Despite recognizing that counseling falls within the scope of practice for SLPs, Simmons-Mackie and Damico's (2011) study found that many SLPs struggled to effectively respond to emotional issues expressed by patients and failed to facilitate exploration of the patient's attitudes, emotions, or beliefs regarding their communication impairment. Luterman's (2020) study suggests a critical gap in training and experience in counseling among SLPs and audiologists, further contributing to their discomfort with incorporating counseling into their intervention.

Specific to the SLP and audiology university training programs, there are still gaps in counseling knowledge and skills that student SLPs and audiologists are provided with (Dawood, Khan, and Bagwandin 2019; Simmons-Mackie and Damico 2011). Sandberg et al. (2021) found that the area of counseling in SLP and audiology was not well represented within education and training, while Aslan, Yucel, and Atkins (2018) explained that there is no standardized counseling education and curriculum in training institutions across the world and national institutions. In essence, counseling is underrepresented in some higher education curriculums, and this affects the counseling competencies of SLP and audiology students and already-practicing clinicians (Aslan, Yücel, and Atkins 2018; Sandberg et al. 2021). In the context of this study, counseling had been taught to SLP and audiology students. This pilot study, therefore, sets out to explore how SLP and audiology students understand and experience counseling with patients and their families.

Methods

Research Design and Context

Utilizing an exploratory qualitative design, this study aims to delve into how SLP and audiology students understand and experience counseling with patients and their families (Creswell and Poth 2016). This study was conducted with students enrolled in the bachelor of speech-language pathology and bachelor of audiology programs in their third and fourth years at the University of the Witwatersrand. The programs are both four-year professional bachelor's degrees and

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require students to provide speech, language, and hearing intervention services from their second year. In 2020, the Speech Pathology and Audiology department introduced the Counseling in SLP and Audiology module at the third-year level, which runs for one term (approximately seven weeks and two hours of lessons per week). While the module was taught in person in 2020, it was taught online in 2021 due to the COVID-19 national lockdown regulations. Although originally conceived as a big research project in the department, the study's limited number of respondents necessitated its adaptation into a pilot study. This diminished response rate could potentially be attributed to the widely observed phenomenon of research fatigue both on a global scale and within the department, as evidenced by similar challenges encountered by colleagues (Watermeyer, Kater, and Khumalo 2022).

Participants

A purposive sampling strategy was used to recruit participants, allowing the author to select participants based on their understanding and experiences of the study's topic (Creswell and Poth 2016). All registered students in their third and fourth years of study in 2021 in the bachelor of speech-language pathology and bachelor of audiology programs were invited to participate in this study. These students had completed the in-person and online Counseling in SLP and Audiology module taught in their third-year curriculum. All students (n = 12) who voluntarily participated in the study were female between the ages of 20–22 years and had provided some form of counseling to patients during their clinics. The students were registered in the bachelor of speech-language pathology program (n = 2) and the bachelor of audiology program (n = 10); they were in their fourth year (n = 3) and third year (n = 9) of study. Race or ethnicity demographics were not collected.

Data Collection Procedure

Before the commencement of the study, ethical clearance was obtained from the university's Non-medical Ethics Committee (clearance number: H21/06/15). Permission was requested and obtained from the head of the department. Data were collected using an anonymous online survey via Google Forms. The self-developed questionnaire was designed and sent out by the respective program administrators to all the 2021 registered students in their third and fourth years in the SLP and audiology programs in August 2021. Students were informed that clicking on the online reflection questionnaire link and submitting their reflections constituted consent to their participation. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended reflective questions, and the current study focuses on students' reflections on their understanding and experiences of counseling. Similar to Cook et al.'s (2017) work, this reflective survey presented a valuable chance for the students to engage in problem-solving, self-inquiry, and evaluation of their practices. The survey also enabled the students to reflect on their practical knowledge, attitudes, and clinical skills. Before the reflective survey was

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distributed to students, the data collection tool was pretested on one student in their third year of study. This process showed that the questions were appropriate and that they addressed the overall research aim (Hilton 2015).

Trustworthiness

Shenton's (2004) trustworthiness strategies were used in the study. The author has provided a clear description of the phenomenon being explored, participants were randomly sampled, and the article was peer-reviewed to assure credibility. The author ensured transferability by providing a detailed description of the research context, the phenomena being examined, and the study methodology to allow comparison to other relevant contexts or settings. Dependability was attained by meticulously documenting the research procedures from start to finish, allowing other researchers to replicate the work. Finally, confirmability was achieved since the researchers acknowledged the study's flaws and provided an in-depth methodological explanation that allowed for the research findings to be scrutinized.

Data Analysis

The initial step of the analysis involved the extraction of online survey data, which had been collected through Google Forms and was subsequently organized in an Excel spreadsheet form. This raw dataset served as the foundational material for the subsequent analytical phase. Upon completing the initial data preparation, the author opted to analyze the dataset using principles of reflexive thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2022). The reflective thematic analysis consisted of six steps: (1) The author immersed themself with the contents of the dataset by reading and rereading the respondents' transcriptions and connecting the content to the overall research question. Initial thoughts and ideas regarding the dataset were noted down. (2) The author conducted the coding process by examining how participants responded to each specific survey question and identifying and labeling units of meaning within the dataset per survey question. (3) The author used both deductive and inductive approaches when collating the codes into potential themes. A deductive approach was initially used whereby the author systematically organized the codes into broader themes that captured ideas relevant to the overall research question. Subsequently, emerging themes followed an inductive approach. (4) The author reviewed and refined themes and emerged subthemes, ensuring they supported the dataset and were consistent with coded extracts. (5) The author clearly defined and named each theme and subtheme, aligning them accurately with the participants' extracts. (6) The author has presented these themes and subthemes as follows, including supporting extracts from the participants. These contribute to understanding how SLP and audiology students understand and experience counseling with patients and their families.

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Findings

The SLP and audiology students reported on their understanding and experiences of counseling with patients and their families from both a theoretical and practical standpoint. Following the data analysis, three prominent themes with underlying subthemes were noted: (1) overall understanding of counseling, (2) overall experiences with providing counseling, and (3) suggestions for the counseling curriculum.

Theme 1: Overall Understanding of Counseling

As far as reflections on the understanding of counseling in SLP and audiology are concerned, three subthemes were identified, namely: (1) provision of educational information and adjustment support, (2) an essential service in holistic patient care, and (3) important for building relationships and improving compliance.

Subtheme 1: Provision of Educational Information and Adjustment Support

The participants' understanding of counseling reflected their theoretical knowledge. While one participant articulated that counseling is "providing knowledge to the client about their diagnosis and the support that they need to come to terms with it" (S4), most of the participants' reflections emphasized counseling as being related to the provision of information and assisting patients and their families in adjusting to the impact of the diagnosis. This is exemplified in the following extracts: "[counseling] is the provision of information to patients about diagnosis, management options, and the way forward, as well as assisting the patient or client to somewhat accept, understand, and adjust to their experiences, diagnosis, and anything else related" (S9); "it is the guidance and assistance of patients and their families/caregivers after a diagnosis has been made" (S11). Additionally, Student 5 added that the diagnosis should be explained to the patients "in a way that they can understand it while attending to other factors such as being empathetic and catering to their feelings while doing so."

Subtheme 2: An Essential Service in Holistic Patient Care

Several participants reflected on how they saw counseling as a move away from the traditional medical approach to treating people with communication difficulties. The following remarks emphasize this point: "the scope of SLP/audiology is not merely to medically treat an impairment…[it is] looking and treating an individual holistically, therefore treating the emotional and mental challenges that are present owing to the impairment" (S1); "the profession has moved away from the medical model of doing things. The psychosocial direction of the profession necessitates the need for counseling after giving a diagnosis and ensuring that the individual is attended to holistically and is given all the necessary support to facilitate [the] adjustment." (S9). Student 12 stated that "after the assessments [are]

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conducted and the diagnosis has been made, counseling then helps us to look at the bigger picture. It considers the systems that the person exists in/interacts [with] and how the new diagnosis impacts their world, their routines, socializing, roles in the family, finances, etc."

Subtheme 3: Important for Building Relationships and Improving Compliance

The participants also recognized counseling as a service required for fostering relationships with patients and their families as well as enhancing compliance with rehabilitation. For example, Student 8 discussed the advantages of counseling, saying that

> providing education and support helps to create rapport and improves compliance. If the clients and families understand the problem, what makes it worse and what can help then they are more willing to engage….Clients often have questions about the diagnosis and want to know more before learning about therapy techniques and want to know the reasons for our suggestions.

Student 10 reported on providing counseling based on the patient's needs and diagnoses and described that "by doing so makes the patient comfortable with the practitioner and more likely to accept and understand the treatment and/or management plan the practitioner has opted for. Counseling also shows the patient that their concerns are being acknowledged and improves service provision."

Theme 2: Overall Experiences with Providing Counseling

The participants reported that, in general, they found it challenging to provide patients with quality counseling due to a range of experiences, including a lack of practice, difficulty applying theoretical knowledge in practice, difficulties with content recall, and pressure during practicals. Student 12 reflected that they

> have not had many patients to practice counseling skills on" and that due to this "educational and supportive counseling is unnatural (I have not found my unique effective way of providing this service). It is a challenge to have a naturally flowing conversation while guiding the client in the chosen approach.

Student 8 noted that providing counseling was challenging because "often there is not much we can do as an SLP to help them, we can only listen," Student 9 noted that it was challenging for them to deliver quality counseling because "content recall has not yet become natural to me, and we are often under pressure during practicals." It is probable that Student 9 is having trouble recalling details relating to their counseling role, and that this problem is made worse by the stress they feel during practical sessions, making it harder for them to give their patients quality counseling. Another participant reported that they experienced feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt in providing counseling:

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> I feel like I am not yet adequately skilled to perform either counseling types to clients and their families as I am still learning my content…also there is an issue of self-doubt—a question of do I know enough to share? What if I over-comfort a client and get their hopes up when the facts are contrary? (S9)

This response suggests that the university's counseling module may be falling short of adequately preparing students to offer counseling to patients and ensure that they do it accurately and effectively.

Theme 3: Suggestions for Improving the Counseling Curriculum

The participants had varying suggestions for the counseling curriculum taught in the SLP and audiology programs. Student 10 stated, "I do believe that more can be done to demonstrate counseling skills." She acknowledged that the academic program had helped offer students the skills needed to provide counseling to patients and their families; however, she suggested that "live demonstration of a lecturer providing counseling to even a simulated hearing loss case would go a long way in further cementing the understanding of the skill and the implementation of them." Student 1 shared the same sentiments by stating that "going into practicals, I felt there could have been more preparation i.e., in lectures role play how you would treat this case, etc." Both students' reflections suggest a need for the counseling module to incorporate live demonstrations in the form of roleplaying during the lectures. Another participant suggested that

> counseling should be introduced earlier on in the curriculum if possible. Students start seeing patients in [the] third year and as such, knowing what counseling skills are necessary to be had would help a lot during the practical…As such, it would have been preferable to have introduced counseling earlier if it could have been done." (S10)

Student 8 suggested that a "more detailed training or protocol to follow in conjunction with referrals to other professionals would be helpful," and Student 6 suggested that the module "should be more psychologically based information where the students are taught by providing guidelines."

Discussion

This pilot study explored the students' understanding and experiences of counseling with patients and their families. The students were introduced to the Counseling in SLP and Audiology module early in their third year. The module sought to develop their knowledge related to counseling, counseling skills, and counseling processes applicable during intervention with patients living with communication difficulties.

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Many of the students' understandings of counseling reflected information and theory that they learned from the counseling module. For example, the type of counseling that the students are taught and do is the provision of educational information and adjustment support during intervention with patients living with different communication disorders. The research findings indicated that educational information included educating different patients and their families about the diagnosed communication impairments and discussing treatment or management options, while adjustment support included guiding and assisting them to come to terms with the psychosocial impact of the diagnosis. Literature on counseling in the field of communication disorders (e.g., Govender and Paken 2015; Lieberman 2018; Holland and Nelson 2018) echoes this way of understanding counseling as provisions of educational information and adjustment support approaches are advocated for. These intervention approaches are ideal because student SLPs and audiologists can help patients and their families comprehend speech, language, and hearing impairment and how to prevent, manage, adjust, and cope with it by guiding, educating, and sharing detailed information regarding the diagnosis.

The findings of this study revealed that students viewed counseling in the SLP and audiology practice as the shift away from the medical model perspective of caring for patients toward a holistic care one. This holistic care perspective was found to encompass not only addressing the patient's physical communication difficulties but also the emotional and mental challenges arising from it. Additionally, holistic care was found to also be related to psychosocial-orientated support post-diagnosis and contextualizing the diagnosis within the patients' interactions with their larger life systems (i.e., daily routines, social interactions, family roles). Collectively, the participants' insights reveal a paradigm shift within the field, emphasizing a person-centered and comprehensive approach that recognizes the intricacies of living with a communication disorder and the necessity of psychological and emotional support alongside medical treatment. It is, therefore, necessary to tap into the different aspects of the patient's well-being if SLP and audiology students are to provide holistic care (Stuvert, Gunjawate, and Ravi 2022). Moreover, students' counseling competencies regarding adjustment support should allow them to gain insight into the emotional and mental challenges experienced by patients as a result of the diagnosis and help them understand how the diagnosis impacts their lives (Meibos, Muñoz, and Twohig 2019). Holistic care offers a thorough awareness of individuals and their diverse care requirements. SLP and audiology students who provide holistic care treatments would be more likely to encourage patients to be satisfied with their medical care and to embrace and take on responsibility for their well-being and health. It will also lead to a greater comprehension of how the disorder affects patients' reactions and their actual needs.

The findings of this study emphasize the integrative role of counseling in building therapeutic relationships between practitioners and patients. According to the students, this would have the advantage of promoting effective relationships, encouraging rehabilitation compliance, and enhancing service quality, underscoring the dynamic interplay between

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patient empowerment and practitioner efficacy. The context in which the students provide counseling includes addressing diagnosis inquiries by the patients and their families, facilitating their knowledge of the diagnosis, and providing tailored counseling support based on the patient's specific needs and diagnosis. These were identified to lead to their increased engagement during the intervention and contribute to the patient's willingness to accept the suggested treatment or rehabilitation plan.

As mentioned before, as part of the programs' requirements, the students are mandated to participate in clinical practice from their second-year level, under the supervision of qualified SLPs and audiologists. Although all students in this study had exposure to clinical practice with patients, the findings revealed that some students experienced challenges when translating theoretical knowledge into effective counseling practice during their practicals. These difficulties stemmed from issues such as limited exposure to counseling (either providing educational information or adjustment support), issues facilitating a counseling conversation with patients, struggling to recall the counseling content, and feeling inadequate and less confident in providing counseling. The findings are similar to those reported in Sekhon et al.'s (2019) review, which found that SLPs lacked the knowledge, skills, and confidence to provide counseling to patients during post-stroke diagnosis. Consequently, the findings expose the potential shortcomings in the university's counseling curriculum, suggesting that it may not sufficiently equip students to offer accurate and effective counseling to patients and their families. Collectively, this underlines the need for a more robust integration of practical experiences, context-sensitive training, and tailored support mechanisms within the counseling curriculum to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and competent application in real clinical settings.

The findings present a wide range of participant recommendations for improving the counseling curriculum in the SLP and audiology programs. These recommendations highlight the participants' need for a more extensive, hands-on, and psychologically informed curriculum that incorporates real-world roleplaying, live demonstrations, early exposure to counseling concepts, and a thorough approach to training to give future SLPs and audiologists the abilities they need to provide effective counseling in clinical settings. Additionally, participants thought that seeing these examples, particularly in simulated scenarios, would validate their comprehension of counseling skills and improve their ability to put such skills into practice. This finding is reinforced by Kulzer and Beck's (2018) explanation of some of the teaching techniques that should be employed in a course on counseling in SLP and audiology, which included classroom roleplaying and simulated patient scenarios. As per Luterman's (2020) suggestions, the counseling module may benefit from being more student-centered, using teaching approaches that incorporate experiential activities. The participants also thought that incorporating counseling concepts sooner or in earlier years of their degree would improve their practical implementation. Considering this, the author of this study believes that counseling training should be introduced in the students' second-year curriculum and that the already included psychological content (e.g., family counseling, narrative therapy, strength-

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based approaches) should be strengthened. The early introduction of counseling training may also be used as an opportunity to bridge the current gaps between the theory and practice of counseling for patients with communication disorders.

Conclusion

Limitations exist with this pilot study. Only SLP and audiology students at a single university provided reflections for the study. Since fewer students than expected responded to the survey, the results cannot be applied to the entire cohort of students enrolled in the programs. A bigger study needs to be conducted with the student population and clinical educators or supervisors guiding students during their clinical practice. This will ensure an in-depth exploration of the topic.

The pilot study has several notable strengths. It effectively delves into students' understandings and experiences of counseling with patients and their families within the context of communication disorders, shedding light on their comprehension of the importance of integrating counseling into interventions. Additionally, the findings offer crucial insights into the disparities between the theoretical understandings of counseling and its practical application, therefore emphasizing the need for more robust integration of practical experiences and tailored support mechanisms in the curriculum. By doing so, the SLP and audiology programs can better equip aspiring SLPs and audiologists to confidently deliver effective counseling to patients with communication disorders.

AI Acknowledgment

The author declares that generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were not used in any way to prepare, write, or complete essential authoring tasks in this manuscript.

Informed Consent

The author has obtained informed consent from all participants.

Conflict of Interest

The author teaches the Counseling in Speech Pathology and Audiology module.

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