

# Illinois Association of Couple and Family Counselors

## Member Interest Survey: Report on Results

In November IACFC undertook a survey of its members and a small number of past or prospective members to get some idea of our members' needs and interests. The survey responses provided a rough overview of who our members are in terms of degree and licensure, location and types of practice, and a sense of our members' concerns and interests. This report summarizes those results and suggests possible directions for IACFC's activities and member outreach.

The survey was designed using SurveyMonkey's free, "Basic" survey tool, and distributed online via SurveyMonkey and in paper form at the November ICA Conference. For online distribution, an opt-out link was provided with each survey participation message from the initial contact to the subsequent two reminders; one IACFC member chose to opt out of any additional SurveyMonkey contacts.

Survey questions included four that characterize who our members are in terms of degree and licensure; geographic area, type of practice and populations served; one that measures interest in various content areas for continuing education; one that measures interest in various practice issues; two that each ask for a short written response on how IACFC can meet member needs and one that seeks instructions for e-mailing a report on survey results. Of some 107 surveys sent or offered, 40 were completed for a response rate of about 37%. Six of these were completed by current or prospective members at the ICA Conference in November.

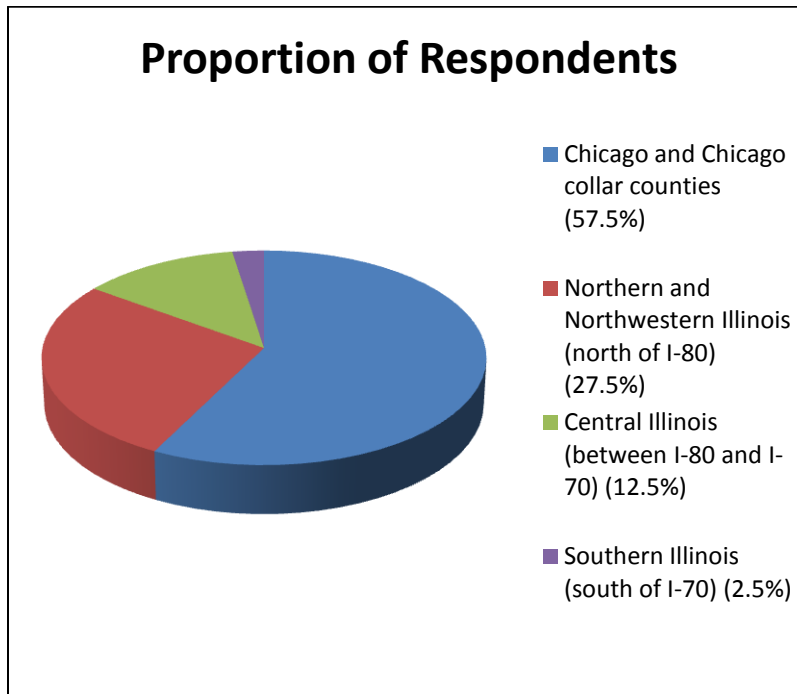
### **Who Are IACFC Members?**

Thirty-one out of 40 survey respondents reported they hold at least a master's degree, with five respondents reporting doctoral-level education (PhD, Ed. D. or Min. D). Seven respondents were students in a master's-level counseling program; two respondents did not identify an educational level. The license most commonly reported was the LCPC (19 out of 40). In addition, three respondents reported LMFT licensure, three listed school counseling or school psychology, one reported an ABD license or certification and five reported LPC licensure. Other certifications noted included CADC (three) and ICDVP (one). Seven respondents reported multiple license types and certifications.

### **Where Do IACFC Members Live and Practice?**

Over 57% of the respondents reported that they live or work in the Chicago and collar counties area. Another 28% reported that they live or work in northern Illinois, defined for this survey as any area

north of Interstate-80 but excluding Chicago and collar counties. Of 40 respondents only five were from Central Illinois and only one was located in Southern Illinois. The proportion of respondents in each region roughly matches the proportion of IACFC membership in each region, as determined from member addresses listed in the September 2014 membership list.



Distribution of Respondents by Geographic Area

## Work Settings and Populations

Many respondents reported working in more than one type of practice. Most combinations included private practice (60% of respondents reported this as part or all of their work) and work in a not-for-profit setting or in a school or university. Two reported working at an inpatient facility, one as an adjunct professor at a community college and one at a pre-school. Respondents reported on the populations they serve: about 44% reported that they work with children; a little over 69% reported working with adolescents; about 77% reported working with adults on an individual basis; just over 25% reported working with aging adults in individual sessions, and 87% reported working with couples and families. All but four reported working with more than one category of client. In addition, some respondents reported working with populations defined by type of concern, including adolescents and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and people dealing with domestic violence and addictions issues,

or by type of group association, such as the GLTBQ (LGBT) population, intergenerational families or university students.

### **Areas of Interest for Continuing Education**

Respondents showed strong interest in Continuing Education in general. In particular, the strongest interest was shown in “Techniques in family and couples counseling” (88%) and “Addressing family issues in therapy for family members with anxiety, depression or other specified mental health disorders” (73%). Over half the respondents also showed interest in trainings on “Family law as pertains to divorce, custody and impact on counseling practice; just half indicated interest in learning about “Getting families on board with treatment plans/needs of individual family members.” As a general trend, less interest was shown for obtaining CEs in “LGBT issues in family and couples counseling” (45%), “Addressing couple and family needs related to autism spectrum disorder” (40%), or “Family counseling connected to military service and veterans” (30%).

Comparing these results by region yielded two items of note: Central Illinois respondents showed a higher interest in learning about family law than those in other regions by a factor of almost two; and respondents in Northern Illinois showed a somewhat higher interest in issues related to Autism Spectrum Disorder, military families and veterans, and LGBT issues (by a factor of 1.5 to 2).

Respondents added “Mindfulness in couples and family therapy;” “trauma, mindfulness and neuroscience;” and “domestic violence and treatment for families that stay together” to the list of CE interests.

### **Practice Issues Ranked in Order of Importance**

Responses for this item tended, predictably, to vary according to whether the respondent was working within academics (either as a student or as an instructor) or in some form of practice in the community at large. Students tended to identify most strongly with concerns around finding practicum placements within the marriage and family therapy field; students and instructors tended to have more concern about mentoring relationships as students begin their post-graduate careers. In contrast, those in practice tended to give higher rank to concerns with the business aspects of practice: “doing business with insurance providers,” “managing HIPAA requirements” and “understanding and applying laws and ethics around work with minors and families.” When responses were compared across geographic regions little or no difference was found.

## **What do you need from your IACFC? and What can we do to win you back?**

Of the 24 respondents who added comments about what they needed from IACFC, 75% indicated they want continuing education and professional development. About 29% indicated they were looking for professional networking. Four respondents indicated they were looking for support and information for professional practice; three noted that they were looking for internship or mentoring opportunities, and one indicated expertise in Imago Therapy, which he or she is interested in presenting. One respondent indicated that he or she would like more communication from IACFC.

Twenty-one respondents indicated their interest in receiving a report on the results of this survey.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the 37% response rate to this survey is encouraging, and write-in responses were thoughtful and informative. Respondents indicated their needs, including affordable, local continuing education in topics of their interest; networking and mutual support; information on issues that affect education and practice; and communication from IACFC. Some differences were noted between students and those in practice that may indicate a need to give extra consideration to the training needs expressed by each group. Where differences in region were noted (mainly the interest levels expressed by respondents in Northern and Northwestern Illinois) this information may be used to determine where to look for venues for certain seminars or mini-conferences.

This survey serves as a beginning, a tool for IACFC members and the Executive Committee to use as we work together to shape our future activities. Possible actions to address member interests and needs include forming committees to seek presenters and build seminars and conferences; updating our website with upcoming events and member-submitted materials, and planning networking events in several areas across Illinois. These goals are achievable with member involvement. Members can look forward to e-mails from IACFC President Cathy Wells in the near future. The IACFC website is “live” and always undergoing improvement. It can be accessed from the drop-down Division menu on ICA’s website at [www.ilcounseling.org](http://www.ilcounseling.org) or directly, at [www.iacfc.org](http://www.iacfc.org).