

Dale E. Bertram, PhD



-Dale E. Bertram is a Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy. He came to Campbellsville University in January 2019. Before arriving at Campbellsville University, Bertram served as the Chair of the Department of Family Therapy at Abilene Christian University. Earlier in his career, he was the Dean of the School of Human Services and the Director of the PhD Program in Marriage and Family Therapy at Amridge University. Bertram is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, an AAMFT Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor, and is also a member of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS), American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH), and the Society of Clinical and Experiential Hypnosis (SCEH). Bertram's research interests include the rhetorical aspects of family therapy dialogue, the integration of faith and learning, professional ethics, and technology assisted mental health services.

Disclosures

ASCH and ASCH-ERF jointly provided this program.

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Dale E. Bertram has no significant financial relationships or conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Opening Question

- How many of you have experimented with AI in clinical thinking?
- How many feel cautious or skeptical?
- What concerns come to mind?

Purpose of the Presentation

- Explore how AI can support consultation and training
- Assist case conceptualization
- Provide reflective feedback
- Encourage ethical AI integration
- Augment—not replace—the therapeutic relationship

Learning Objectives

- Describe three ways AI can assist Ericksonian clinicians
- Use AI prompts for consultation and skill development
- Identify ethical considerations
- Integrate AI as a reflective learning tool

Ericksonian Principles Relevant to AI

- Utilization
- Individual responsiveness
- Indirect communication
- Creativity and improvisation
- Learning through experience

Milton Erickson's Spirit of Experimentation

- Curiosity and exploration
- Creative problem solving
- Tailoring therapy to the individual
- Learning through experience

Hypnosis as a Learning Process

- Focused attention
- Use of imagination
- Utilization of client resources
- Therapeutic storytelling
- Experiential learning

What AI Is (and Is Not)

- AI is a language model and reflective tool
- AI is not a therapist
- AI is not conscious
- AI does not replace clinical judgment

AI as a Reflective Partner

- Brainstorming colleague
- Training assistant
- Consultation prompt generator
- Mirror for clinical thinking

Why AI Fits Ericksonian Thinking

- Encourages flexible thinking
- Supports narrative development
- Expands metaphor creation
- Stimulates intervention ideas

Case Consultation Example

- Client with anxiety and performance fear
- Difficulty entering trance
- Prompt: How might an Ericksonian therapist approach this?

Example AI Consultation Output

- Utilization of anxiety as trance
- Metaphor-based intervention
- Indirect suggestion
- Reframing resistance

What AI Did Well

- Generated multiple perspectives
- Stimulated creativity
- Expanded intervention options
- Encouraged utilization strategies

What the Clinician Must Still Do

- Evaluate suggestions
- Apply clinical judgment
- Adapt interventions to client
- Maintain therapeutic relationship

AI for Hypnotic Language Practice

- Generate metaphors
- Develop indirect suggestions
- Create therapeutic stories
- Practice reframing

Example Prompt

- Generate an Ericksonian metaphor for a client struggling with self-confidence

Practicing Indirect Suggestion

- Embedded suggestions
- Confusion techniques
- Permissive language
- Utilization-based reframing

Role-Play Training

- Simulate client responses
- Practice therapy dialogue
- Supervision exercises
- Training for students

AI and Creative Problem Solving

- See patterns differently
- Generate new metaphors
- Reframe symptoms
- Expand intervention choices

Ericksonian Utilization and AI

- Example reframe: Worrying may reflect how deeply a person cares
- AI can generate many reframes quickly

Ethical Principles

- Confidentiality
- Informed consent
- Clinical responsibility
- Professional competence

Protecting Client Information

- Avoid identifiable information
- Use de-identified scenarios
- Follow ethical and legal standards

AI Should Never Replace

- Clinical judgment
- Professional supervision
- Therapeutic relationship
- Ethical responsibility

Applications for Clinicians

- Consultation brainstorming
- Hypnotic language development
- Case conceptualization

Applications for Educators

- Training demonstrations
- Supervision exercises
- Role-play simulations
- Learning prompts

Applications for Supervisors

- Reflective supervision questions
- Intervention brainstorming
- Teaching conceptualization

Live AI Demonstration

- Prompt → Response → Clinical reflection
- Example: Generate a hypnotic metaphor for grief

AI as a Collaborative Ally

- AI works best as a thinking partner
- Learning assistant
- Creativity catalyst

The Human Element

- Empathy
- Presence
- Attunement
- Therapeutic alliance

Final Thought

- Technology can expand our thinking, but healing still happens through human connection

Discussion

- What possibilities do you see?
- What concerns remain?
- How might you experiment with AI?