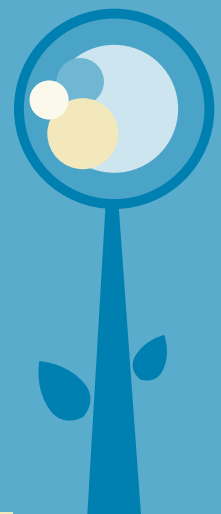


**STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY
COLLEGE COUNSELING
FACULTY AND PROGRAMS**

ADOPTED SPRING 1997; REVISED AND ADOPTED FALL 2008



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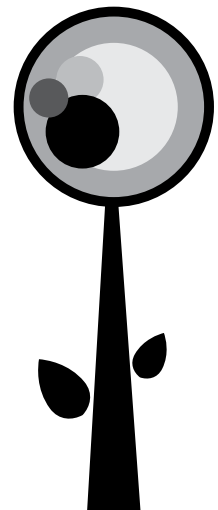


TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CORE FUNCTIONS.....	3
ACADEMIC COUNSELING.....	4
CAREER COUNSELING.....	6
PERSONAL COUNSELING.....	6
CRISIS INTERVENTION.....	7
OUTREACH.....	7
PARTICIPATION AND ADVOCACY.....	8
PROGRAM REVIEW AND RESEARCH.....	8
TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	9
ETHICAL STANDARDS.....	11
THE COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP.....	11
CONFIDENTIALITY, PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATION, AND PRIVACY.....	12
PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY.....	12
RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS.....	12
EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT, AND INTERPRETATION.....	13
SUPERVISION, TRAINING, AND TEACHING.....	13
RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION.....	13
RESOLVING ETHICAL ISSUES.....	13
ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION.....	14
HUMAN RESOURCES.....	15
PHYSICAL FACILITIES.....	16
NEW TECHNOLOGIES.....	17
REVIEW OF STANDARDS.....	19
REFERENCES.....	20
APPENDIX: AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS.....	23

INTRODUCTION

COUNSELING PROGRAMS IN THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY colleges play a key role in helping students succeed. Over the years, the functions counseling departments perform have increased significantly, further exacerbating the ever-present pressure to serve more students in cost-effective ways. As a result of the expansion of services absent the resources to ensure the provision of such services, the question has arisen as to what roles counseling faculty should play in the delivery of services to students. To clarify these roles, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (Academic Senate) developed a policy paper, *The Role of Counseling Faculty in the California Community Colleges*, which was adopted at its Spring 1995 Plenary Session. This paper provides useful background on counseling in the California community colleges. The reader is also referred to a paper adopted by the Academic Senate in 2003, *Consultation Council Task Force on Counseling*, which provides further discussion of the role of counseling faculty, the importance of counseling faculty in facilitating student success, and information on perceptions of the state of counseling in our system.

While *The Role of Counseling Faculty in the California Community Colleges* described the range of activities of counseling faculty, it did not set out standards for how those roles were to be performed. Specific standards for some elements of counseling services have appeared in regulation, accreditation guidelines, and ethics statements; but nowhere had these standards been collected, reviewed, and presented systematically to the community college counseling field until the first version of this paper, *Standards of Practice for California Community College Counseling*, was developed and adopted by the Academic Senate in 1997. The original paper and this revision outline effective practices, by addressing the issue of standards of practice and service for California community college counseling faculty and programs. This revision serves as an update, reflecting changes that have transpired in the student services area and incorporating philosophical changes in approaches to counseling. The document has also been renamed to recognize that counseling faculty and counseling programs are separate entities; there are services that a counseling program may provide but that may not be specifically a function of counseling faculty.

This paper was developed by the Counseling and Library Faculty Issues Committee of the Academic Senate, with assistance from others in the field. The Academic Senate is dedicated to fostering the effective participation of all faculty in academic and professional matters and is directed in its activities by resolutions proposed by community college faculty throughout the state and considered for adoption by representatives of the various colleges. This paper, and the one that precedes it, were developed to address needs recognized by means of the Academic Senate for the California Community College's resolution process. Faculty seeking to effect change are encouraged to use their local senate, as well as the Academic Senate, to facilitate improvements in how we serve our students.

This paper asserts that there should be a set of universal standards of practice for all community college counseling programs, regardless of institutional or departmental size or fiscal constraints. Complying with these standards requires both adequate staffing and support. These standards are set out in six areas:

- A. Core Functions,
- B. Ethical Standards,
- C. Organization and Administration,
- D. Human Resources,
- E. Physical Facilities, and
- F. New Technologies.

These standards have been developed by counseling and other faculty through review of current practice, policy, and legislation; study of national standards for the counseling discipline; and projection of needs for future practice. They are designed to be specific enough to be meaningful, yet general enough to allow flexibility in meeting local needs and constraints. They are intended to be used in the design, development, and review of counseling department policies and practices.

A. CORE FUNCTIONS

TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR MISSION IN PROVIDING essential support to community college students, counseling programs perform a set of core functions through individual and group interactions, as well as classroom instruction. While differences in student populations and institutional priorities may affect the resources dedicated to these functions within individual counseling programs, nevertheless, these functions are so fundamental to the mission of community college counseling that every program, whether general, categorical, or aimed at specific populations, should perform them. These functions are derived from Title 5 Regulations and from materials from the American Counseling Association.

- 1) Academic counseling, in which the student is assisted in assessing, planning, and implementing his or her immediate and long-range academic goals.
- 2) Career counseling, in which the student is assisted in assessing his or her aptitudes, abilities, and interests, and advised concerning current and future employment trends.
- 3) Personal counseling, in which the student is assisted with personal, family or other social concerns, when that assistance is related to the student's education.
- 4) Crisis intervention, either directly or through cooperative arrangements with other resources on campus or in the community.
- 5) Conducting outreach to students and the community to encourage them to avail themselves of services, focused on maximizing all students' potential to benefit from the academic experience.
- 6) Participating in the college governance process and advocating to make the environment as beneficial to the intellectual, emotional, and physical development of students as possible.
- 7) Researching and reviewing counseling programs and services with the goal of improving their effectiveness.
- 8) Training and professional development for counseling staff, interns, and others in the college community.

A detailed review of each function and its related standards follows this introduction. Although the first three core functions—academic, career, and personal counseling—are described below as separate and distinct functions, in practice they are often inextricably related. The structure of community college counseling programs should be based on the recognition of the student as a whole and complex human being with concerns and issues that are not completely distinct or separate; academic issues intertwine with career issues, and with personal life-coping issues.

An overarching principle that underlies all counseling activities is an appreciation of and respect for the diversity of the student population. All students must be counseled with a respect for their

origins and cultural values. Counseling faculty need to be aware of how their own unique cultural backgrounds and experiences may influence their attitudes, values, and biases about students' psychological processes.

Counseling faculty need to develop knowledge about how oppression, discrimination, and stereotyping affect them personally and influence their work; and how such attitudes and behaviors might impinge upon the lives of their students. Counseling faculty should actively seek out educational and life experiences that enrich their cross-cultural knowledge, understanding, and skills in order to provide more culturally sensitive and effective counseling.

Counseling faculty should acquire specific knowledge about the characteristics of the student populations with which they work, as well as in the community as a whole. They should develop an understanding of how race, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, religion, marital status, socioeconomic status and the like affect personality formation, career choices, learning styles, help-seeking behavior, and the appropriateness of counseling approaches. An understanding of the impact of unique life experiences, such as serving in the armed services or having been incarcerated, should also guide counseling faculty in their interactions with students.

In any given counseling session, counseling faculty use their understanding of human and student development, as well as counseling theories, to provide the combination of services that address each student's particular needs in an integrated fashion. In recognition of the complexity of student needs and life circumstances, counseling services should be delivered in a variety of ways, including online and face-to-face individual and group counseling, workshops, and college courses.

ACADEMIC COUNSELING

- 1) Academic counseling services include assessment using multiple measures and diagnosis of students' academic abilities, disabilities, strengths and weaknesses; help in clarifying academic goals and selecting a program of study; educational planning for transfer, associate degree, and certificate programs; assisting with clarifying choices and actions, as well as decision-making, planning, and transitioning; making referrals to other support services when a need is indicated; intervening when students' academic performance is at risk; and providing follow-up (e.g., academic mentoring, early alert processes, and probation counseling).
- 2) Counseling faculty must ensure that their knowledge of the nature and requirements of the various disciplines offered at their college is accurate and current by establishing strong links
- 3) with other faculty, in order to effectively provide educational planning services for transfer, career preparation, degree completion, and certificate programs.
- 4) Counseling faculty assist students in transitioning to college through pre-enrollment advising during high school, and through re-entry and community outreach.

- 5) Counseling program services should include assisting students in transitioning to baccalaureate-granting institutions through such services as transfer workshops, university application workshops, university representative visitations, “college day” events, and courses taught by counseling faculty. These transfer services should be offered through regular counseling departmental activities as well as by transfer centers. It is important that transfer counseling be an integral part of the counseling program services and not relegated solely to the transfer center on each college campus. Minimum program standards for transfer centers are established by Title 5 § 51027 and include the provision of academic planning for transfer, supporting and monitoring the progression of transfer students, and the provision of “a resource library of college catalogs, transfer guides, articulation information and agreements, applications to baccalaureate institutions, and related transfer information.”
- 6) Counseling faculty should work closely with articulation officers to ensure that their college’s articulation reflects the needs of students. Colleges should ensure that faculty articulation officers are given enough reassigned time to perform their function. Counseling faculty must have ready access to accurate, up-to-date articulation agreements established between their college and neighboring four-year colleges and universities.
- 7) Counseling faculty must stay current on transfer requirements, including admission, general education, and major requirements for the transfer institutions in their region. Counseling faculty need to regularly participate in transfer conferences and workshops, such as those conducted by the University of California, California State University, and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.
- 8) Counseling programs must work closely with their college’s matriculation program, especially in the areas of assessment interpretation, application of multiple measures, orientation program development, academic counseling and advising services, follow-up, and prerequisite and corequisite implementation.
- 9) Counseling faculty assist students through the processes of transcript valuation/ interpretation, and general education transfer certification.
- 10) Counseling faculty should develop curriculum and offer courses and workshops that teach the skills needed for student development and academic success, such as study skills, note taking, and time management. In addition, counseling faculty and faculty in other departments should collaborate to develop discipline-specific academic success courses.
- 11) Counseling faculty should introduce students to Internet resources and software related to college services (i.e., registration, grade access), transfer, and career options in order to assist them in becoming more self-reliant, critical, and independent researchers and learners.

CAREER COUNSELING

- 1) Counseling faculty teach the career development process and its importance in setting and achieving academic and life goals.
- 2) The career development process should be taught as holistic and lifelong. Counseling faculty teach students to examine their lives as a whole—values, interests, aptitudes, and life circumstances. Students need to be made aware that career skills learned now, such as career search and decision-making methods, may be useful throughout a lifetime.
- 3) Career counseling services should be delivered in a variety of ways, including online and face-to-face individual and group counseling, workshops, and college courses.
- 4) Career counseling services include assisting students in clarifying career goals, through intake interviews and administration and interpretation of career assessment instruments; instruction in career exploration using the latest technology and methods; and instruction in career goal-setting and decision-making.
- 5) Counseling departments should include a career center that houses up-to-date information on career research, labor market, educational programs, and all aspects of the career development process. Technical assistance, electronic resources, and equipment need to be available to help students access this information.
- 6) Services should include assistance with job placement and the job search process, including instruction in resume preparation and interviewing skills.
- 7) Career counseling services should reach out to students who have not declared a major to assist them in setting academic and career goals.
- 8) Counseling faculty should serve on career technical education (CTE) program advisory committees and create on-going partnerships with CTE faculty for the purpose of staying current on local labor market trends and employment demands.
- 9) Counseling programs should establish liaison relationships with other career-related programs, such as Regional Occupational Centers and Programs (ROCPs), work experience programs, job-training programs, school-to-work initiatives, intersegmental projects, and private industry councils.

PERSONAL COUNSELING

- 1) Personal counseling services must be available to students whose personal life issues interfere with their academic success. These include, but need not be limited to individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, support groups, and courses or workshops on personal life issues (e.g., dealing with self-esteem issues, stress management, and substance abuse prevention). While counseling faculty should be prepared to provide some of these services, referrals to mental health professionals should be made as needed.

- 2) Counseling faculty should develop curriculum and offer courses and workshops that encourage the holistic development of the student as a functioning member of society (e.g., courses in personal development and life-coping skills).
- 3) Counseling programs should maintain up-to-date information on college and community resources and should refer students to appropriate services as needed.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

- 1) As part of their mission to provide assistance with personal life issues, counseling programs should have a system that assists students in acute emotional distress, including an intervention plan for students in personal crisis who require immediate attention.
- 2) For situations when a student is a potential danger to self or others, districts should have a clear policy of who has authority to make such determinations, and specific procedures to be followed. Counseling faculty should verify that such policies exist and, if not, be a catalyst for policy development.
- 3) Counseling faculty should work closely with administration and outside agencies to ensure that the needs of students in crisis are met and that personnel appropriate to assist in such situations are available.
- 4) Counseling faculty should participate in the creation and implementation of campus-wide crisis intervention efforts.
- 5) Counseling faculty should be familiar with district disaster plans, and be prepared to assist students in the event of a disaster on campus.

OUTREACH

Counseling programs should make proactive efforts to reach out to both current and potential students. Such outreach should respond to the diversity of race, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, life experiences, age, physical or mental disability, religion, marital status, and socioeconomic status among students, and to any groups in need that can be identified, such as undeclared, basic skills, and at-risk students. Counseling faculty may be involved in making visits to local schools to promote college-going, as well as on-campus activities that introduce primary students and community members to the college and its diverse educational opportunities. Extra effort should be made to identify and make contact with community members who may otherwise not avail themselves of needed services or who might be better served by nontraditional methods.

PARTICIPATION AND ADVOCACY

- 1) Consultation regarding students should be provided as needed to other faculty and other appropriate campus staff, within the limits of confidentiality, as defined by the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA).
- 2) Consultation with parents, spouses, and agencies that bear some responsibility for particular students should be provided within the limits of confidentiality, as defined by FERPA.
- 3) Counseling programs should play an active role in interpreting and advocating the needs of students to administrators, faculty, and staff. Such advocacy should include, but not be limited to curriculum, academic policies and practices, and student rights and responsibilities. Counseling faculty should participate actively in campus, regional and state governance processes to carry out such advocacy.
- 4) Counseling faculty should provide leadership in articulation and curriculum development through consultation with other faculty.

PROGRAM REVIEW AND RESEARCH

- 1) Counseling programs must undergo regularly scheduled reviews. Each review should be performed a minimum of once per accreditation cycle and should be linked to the college program review, budgetary planning, and student learning outcomes processes. General information on accreditation, student learning outcomes, and the role of faculty can be found in various Academic Senate documents, such as *Agents of Change: Examining The Role of Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Coordinators in California Community Colleges* and *The 2002 Accreditation Standards: Implementation*.
- 2) Data for the review process should be gathered from students, faculty, classified staff and administration. At a minimum, data should include numbers of students served per year; types of services delivered and perceived quality of services; timeliness of student access to counseling; counseling curriculum; counseling faculty participation in campus decision making; and clarity and accuracy of counseling information.
- 3) Student learning outcomes for counseling programs should be developed by counseling faculty and measurement data should be used to improve the effectiveness of services, increase student success, and advocate for needed resources.
- 4) Assistance in determining the appropriate methods for collecting, compiling and analyzing the data should be provided by campus research professionals.
- 5) After being collected and analyzed, counseling program data should be reviewed by all counseling personnel.
- 6) Counseling program strengths and weaknesses should be documented, shared, and integrated with campus-wide student learning outcomes and planning. Staffing needs and resources

should also be communicated. A plan for program improvements to address weaknesses should be developed.

- 7) Plans should be reviewed annually to encourage progress toward counseling program goals.
- 8) Other research, whether to improve local programs or to further the goals of the counseling program, should be encouraged and supported.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1) Counseling faculty and counseling programs share a responsibility to provide competent academic, career, personal, and crisis intervention counseling services to students. Therefore, programs must ensure that professional development activities are made available to all counseling faculty.
- 2) Each program should assess its counseling faculty's knowledge and skills in the core functions, particularly academic, career, personal counseling and crisis intervention, as well as in multicultural/diversity awareness and use of technology. The program should provide opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills in each of those areas that need strengthening.
- 3) Counseling programs need to provide formal orientation and training for all new counseling faculty, full or part-time, temporary or permanent, to ensure that they possess the essential knowledge to perform their counseling roles
- 4) If a counseling program uses paraprofessionals, it should follow the guidelines articulated in the paper *The Role of Counseling Faculty in the California Community Colleges*:

While the specific qualifications for a given position might differ, three crucial issues must be considered: first, that the competencies expected of paraprofessionals need to be defined explicitly, with the full participation of the counseling faculty; second, that paraprofessionals need to be trained and supervised carefully with full participation of the counseling staff; and last that paraprofessionals not be expected to perform tasks beyond their qualifications. (ASCCC, 1995, p.8)

- 5) If a counseling program accepts graduate interns, they should be provided training and close supervision during their internship to ensure quality service to students. Interns should be closely screened to determine their knowledge and readiness before they see students outside the presence of a counseling faculty member.
- 6) If a counseling program uses student workers, the same precautions listed in items 3, 4, and 5 above should apply to an even greater degree. Students should be selected carefully, provided intensive training as to their role and limitations, and continuously supervised.
- 7) When programs use interns, paraprofessionals, or student workers in the delivery of services, all staff should wear identification or otherwise indicate their positions, in order to avoid confusion on the part of students.

- 8) Where colleges use faculty advisors who are not counseling faculty, counseling programs should provide training and maintain a close linkage with these faculty members in order to assure a high quality in information dissemination to students, and to clarify the differing roles of counseling and advising. Faculty advisors who are not counseling faculty should exercise great caution in providing guidance in areas in which they lack training, although students should be encouraged to seek guidance from a wide range of both counseling and discipline faculty members.
- 9) Counseling programs should offer training and development opportunities for counseling department classified staff, to improve their skills and knowledge in providing quality services to students.
- 10) All faculty and staff, including interns, student workers, and paraprofessionals, should receive training about confidentiality and the proper maintenance of records.
- 11) Counseling faculty should offer in-service training to the larger college community about counseling programs, services, and student experiences.

B. ETHICAL STANDARDS

PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL PRACTICE FORMS THE CORNERSTONE of high quality counseling services. As ethical and legal issues arise in the course of providing counseling services, it is no easy task to determine the legal requirements that pertain to each situation, to interpret those laws, or operationalize them within a counseling program. Thus, it is important that there be regular communication among the counseling faculty, the program administrator, and the district's legal counsel about these matters.

Counseling faculty must know the laws and regulations relevant to their work, and should follow scrupulously the obligations and limitations these laws create. The counseling administrator, in particular, is responsible to see that the policies and procedures of a program follow both the law and the ethical standards of the profession.

Counseling faculty and staff should maintain strict adherence to the ethical code of the American Counseling Association (ACA), as adopted in 2005 and subsequently adopted by the California Counseling Association. The full text of the code has been reproduced as an appendix to this document. The ACA document delineates standards in eight areas of practice:

- A. The Counseling Relationship
- B. Confidentiality, Privileged Communication, and Privacy
- C. Professional Responsibility
- D. Relationship with Other Professionals
- E. Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation
- F. Supervision, Training, and Teaching
- G. Research and Publication
- H. Resolving Ethical Issues

The following highlights some of the standards that have particular applicability to community college counseling practice.

THE COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP

One of the great strengths of the community colleges is the diversity of populations that they serve. Counseling faculty need to be mindful of the individuality and value of each person who seeks educational services. Therefore, counseling faculty must not condone or engage in discrimination based on age, color, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or socioeconomic status.

Counseling faculty must actively attempt to understand the diverse backgrounds of the students with whom they work. This should include, but not be limited to, learning how the counselor's own cultural/ethnic and racial identity impacts her/his values and beliefs about the counseling process.

Counseling faculty should be mindful of their professional limitations, and the limitations of their counseling program's services. If they determine that they, or their program, are unable to be of professional service, they must not abandon or neglect their students. Counseling faculty should make appropriate, informed referrals to alternative resources.

Counseling faculty are professionals and must maintain an appropriate professional relationship with all students. Counseling faculty must not engage in any type of sexual activity with those that they counsel. They should be cognizant of their positions of power, and thus should avoid dual relationships, such as business, personal, or familial relationships, that might impair their judgment or increase the risk of harm to students.

CONFIDENTIALITY, PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATION, AND PRIVACY

Counseling faculty should keep confidential any information related to a student's use of counseling services, avoiding unwarranted disclosure of information. However, there are exceptions. The rule of confidentiality does not apply when "disclosure is required to protect clients or identified others from serious and foreseeable harm or when legal requirements demand that confidential information must be revealed." (ACA, 2005, p. 7) . Counseling faculty should consult with other professionals, the counseling program administrator, and legal counsel when in doubt as to the validity of an exception. Counseling faculty have the obligation to ensure that confidentiality is maintained by all support staff as well. The counseling program's procedures should provide for confidentiality in creating, securing, accessing, transferring and disposing of all counseling records. Counselors should, to the degree possible, make students aware of circumstances in which the confidentiality of their communication may not be protected.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Counseling faculty have the responsibility of maintaining their professional competence by engaging in continuing education activities. Counseling faculty must not use their place of employment in the community college as a means of recruiting clients for their private practice. They must not use their professional positions to seek unjustified personal gain, sexual favor, or unearned goods and services. Counseling faculty must be mindful of the boundaries of their competence, referring students to other service providers as needed.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Counseling faculty should establish appropriate agreements with administrators, colleagues, and other staff regarding counseling relationships, confidentiality, and adherence to professional standards. Counseling faculty must not engage in practices that are illegal or unethical.

EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT, AND INTERPRETATION

Counseling faculty should provide only those assessment services for which they are competent. In particular, psychological testing should be conducted only by qualified personnel. Counseling faculty should apply professional standards in the selection of test instruments, administration of the tests, security of the tests, scoring, and interpretation. Before an assessment is conducted students need to be informed of its nature and purpose and use of the results. Accurate interpretation should be provided to the student after every assessment and accompany the release of assessment results.

SUPERVISION, TRAINING, AND TEACHING

Counseling faculty must be knowledgeable about the ethical, legal, and regulatory aspects of their profession and should be skilled in applying that knowledge in their training of others. They should serve as role models of professional behavior. Counseling faculty who supervise the counseling services of others, such as interns, should take reasonable steps to ensure that the services provided are professional. They should clearly state in advance to the individuals they train, the levels of competency and responsibility expected, the appraisal methods, and the timing of evaluations.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

Counseling faculty should seek consultation and observe stringent safeguards to protect the rights of students and research participants. Information obtained from students or other research participants must be kept strictly confidential.

RESOLVING ETHICAL ISSUES

Counseling faculty have the responsibility of upholding the standards of their profession. As part of that responsibility, when counseling faculty possess reasonable cause to believe that a fellow counseling faculty member may not be acting in an ethical manner, appropriate action must be taken, which may include direct consultation with the counseling faculty member, others knowledgeable about professional ethics, administrators, legal advisors, and professional organizations.

C. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF A counseling program has great impact on its effectiveness. Therefore, the following standards should be applied:

- 1) A specific individual should be designated by the institution to administer the counseling program. The administrator should possess the minimum qualifications of the counseling discipline.
- 2) The administrator should be skilled in leadership, research, fiscal management, interpersonal relations, cultural sensitivity, staff selection and training, planning, public relations, and evaluation. He or she should also possess a thorough knowledge of student development theory and practice, as well as of the California Community College System.
- 3) The counseling faculty should have a primary role in developing the job description and in the hiring of their administrators.
- 4) The administrators of counseling programs should be positioned in the administrative structure to effectively interact with other administrators, as well as with the chief student services and chief instructional administrators.
- 5) Specific responsibilities of counseling programs need to be clearly delineated, published, and disseminated to the entire college community.
- 6) Counseling services should be defined and structured primarily by the counseling faculty who provide these services to ensure that those who are most knowledgeable about these issues will have the major role in making decisions that directly affect service delivery to students.
- 7) Counseling program services should be organized in a way that provides for the direct and ongoing interaction of counseling faculty with other faculty, staff, and administrators.
- 8) Counseling services should be scheduled and funded adequately in order to accommodate the needs of students, including evening, weekend, and online students. Services should also be scheduled to meet fluctuations in student demand. Accommodation should be made, however, to allow counseling faculty to participate in staff development activities offered to other faculty and staff.
- 9) Counseling sessions need to be of appropriate length to allow students to fully discuss plans, programs, courses, academic progress, and other subjects related to their educational progress.
- 10) Counseling services should be delivered by a variety of methods, including individual sessions, group sessions, workshops, online, and course offerings.
- 11) Adequate and equitable resources should be made available to counseling programs in order to implement quality services.

D. HUMAN RESOURCES

THE QUALITY OF A COUNSELING PROGRAM is dependent upon the level of staffing and the qualifications of the professionals providing services. Districts must hire an adequate number of counseling faculty who are trained to handle the wide variety of concerns that affect community college students; as well as sufficient support staff to operate the program efficiently. The number of counseling faculty should be sufficient to provide students with suitable access to professional counseling services. In the 2003 document, *Consultation Council Task Force on Counseling*, the Academic Senate recommends a counselor/student ratio of 1:370 (ASCCC, 2003, p. 22).

- 1) Counseling faculty must meet the minimum qualifications of the California community college counseling discipline as published in *Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges*. Their education and abilities should be those that are described in detail in the Academic Senate document, *The Role of Counseling Faculty in the California Community Colleges*.
- 2) Sufficient counseling faculty should be available to meet student needs and state mandates. Ideally, staffing will be sufficient to ensure that students have access to non-emergency counseling services within one week of requesting such services. In addition, students should be able to obtain answers to brief questions within one day.
- 3) In concert with other appropriate campus personnel, counseling faculty trained in crisis management should be available to respond to crisis situations within one hour.
- 4) Counseling programs should, whenever possible, ensure that the counseling faculty reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the local community. Whenever possible, counseling faculty and classified staff who speak the primary languages of local populations should be available.
- 5) There should be sufficient numbers of full-time counseling faculty to allow for active counseling faculty participation in college, regional, and state governance, as well as in professional development and professional organization activities, without disruption of a program's services to students.
- 6) There should be standardized and consistent hiring and training for all counseling faculty, regardless of full- or part-time status or assignment to a specific program. This training should include familiarization of all counseling faculty with all college programs and services, issues of student equity, specific campus populations, the campus student data system, and, as appropriate, instructional techniques.
- 7) Sufficient support staff should be available to maintain student records, organize resource materials, receive students, make appointments, and handle other operational needs. Information technology staff should be available for research, data collection, systems development, and maintenance of electronic equipment and software to support the delivery of quality on campus and online services.

E. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

COUNSELING SERVICES SHOULD BE READILY ACCESSIBLE and visible to all students, including those who are physically challenged and those attending classes at off-site centers. Counseling programs should be located where students will feel at ease when seeking services; physically separate from administrative offices and campus police. Wherever counseling services are offered, including outreach and off-site centers, these minimum standards should be met:

- 1) Each full-time faculty member should be provided with a private office, in order to assure student confidentiality. Part-time counseling faculty should be allowed use of private offices when they are counseling students. Each office should have a telephone with messaging capabilities, a computer with access to student records and other pertinent online information, an ergonomically designed desk and chair, and secure hard copy and electronic file storage. Overall, counseling faculty offices should create an inviting environment for students and a professional, safe, and functional work site which is accessible to all.
- 2) Counseling programs should have up-to-date computers, peripherals, copiers, and other equipment to support record keeping, research, and publication activities. Technical resources for media presentations should also be available.
- 3) The reception area should provide a welcoming waiting area for students.
- 4) In order to ensure confidentiality, student records in hard copy should be maintained in a secure location where only authorized staff have access.
- 5) Where district demographics warrant, information and assistance should be available, by phone, electronically, and in hard copy, not only in English but other languages as well.
- 6) The counseling area should have informational resources that include appropriate professional journals, books, and electronic resources. A collection of current occupational and career information should be readily accessible to counseling personnel and students in hard copy and electronically.
- 7) An area suitable for individual and group testing should be available. The space allocated for this purpose should be designed to eliminate noise and visual distractions.
- 8) Counseling programs should maintain, or have ready access to, space suitable for group counseling sessions, classes, and staff meetings.
- 9) A written disaster plan should be displayed outlining procedures for emergency evacuations for both crime and natural disasters. A personal security system should be in place where police can be notified immediately in case of emergencies.
- 10) All offices, reception areas, work sites, and classrooms must be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

F. NEW TECHNOLOGIES

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT COUNSELING FACULTY be provided with new technologies for continual adoption and use in doing their jobs. Counseling is by nature an interpersonal activity rather than an interaction between human and machine. While computers will never replace the skills of a counseling professional, nevertheless, computers have the capacity to dramatically improve access and accuracy in the delivery of information. Computers and printers are valuable and necessary tools needed for counseling faculty to be effective and efficient. Counseling programs need to take advantage of emerging technologies to meet the needs and expectations of students. Therefore, counseling faculty need to take the initiative to develop technology plans that add to the counseling relationship, rather than detract from it. Counseling faculty should take an active role in the development and implementation of campus and program technology plans in order to advocate for student data systems and features that will provide the information needed for counselors and students, in a user-friendly manner.

Technology use practices should incorporate the following principles:

- 1) Counseling programs should select only those technologies which enhance the delivery of services to students. Electronic access to student educational plans, articulation information, transcripts, petitions, and the like should be provided.
- 2) To supplement on-campus student contacts, counseling programs should provide online services (e.g. counseling and orientation) as appropriate, in order to increase access and accommodate distance education, remotely located, disabled, and other students who may not seek assistance during regular business hours. Distance education courses offered by counseling faculty should also be available.
- 3) Counseling faculty should use technology, when appropriate, to communicate directly with students concerning the clarification of goals, decision making, and academic and life planning.
- 4) Counseling programs should use technology to enhance communication within the counseling department, as well as to the college and to the community.
- 5) Counseling programs should use technology to accurately and efficiently document student use of services. Such data are needed for program review, accreditation, and matriculation reporting purposes.
- 6) Counseling technology plans should be developed with significant input from users of the plans (i.e., counseling faculty and personnel, counseling administrators, and students) in collaboration with external technology experts and information technology staff.

- 7) Counseling technology plans should be reviewed regularly in order to assess the need for updating computers and other electronic equipment and resources. Counseling technology plans should be closely integrated with college and district technology plans and should ensure the provision of all necessary support.
- 8) There should be adequate information technology support for maintenance of current technology and development and implementation of new technologies.
- 9) Policies and procedures to maximize technology use and access, while ensuring safety of records and appropriate confidentiality, should be developed and implemented. Electronic records should be secured with passwords and permissions.
- 10) Communicating with students on the Internet should be done so on an encrypted site to help ensure confidentiality. Counselors, however, should be aware of and advise students that despite reasonable measures, there is some possibility that security could be compromised.
- 11) As counseling services require greater use of technology, appropriate time, staff development, and on-going support must be provided for personnel to acquire and maintain skills to fully use these technologies.
- 12) Counseling faculty should be involved in ensuring that the information provided on all departmental Web pages is accurate and up-to-date.
- 13) All students should have access to counseling faculty when they need counseling, whether on campus or in an online environment. Technology should enhance and increase student access to counseling.
- 14) Counseling faculty should have access to classrooms equipped for multi-media instructional presentations.
- 15) Students enrolled through distance education must be afforded the same level of counseling and support services available to other students. The services should adhere to all the standards contained in this document.
- 16) All computer equipment, software, and online pages used by counseling faculty and available to students must be barrier free and compliant with the American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 and 508 guidelines of the Rehabilitation Act.

REVIEW OF STANDARDS

ALTHOUGH THESE STANDARDS SHOULD STAND FOR a number of years, they should be revisited periodically to address new developments in the field. Therefore, the Counseling and Library Faculty Issues Committee of the Academic Senate should review these standards at least every six years.

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APPENDIX: AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS

INCLUDED WITH PERMISSION (APPROVED BY THE ACA GOVERNING COUNCIL, 2005)

Available at <http://www.counseling.org/Resources/CodeOfEthics/TP/Home/CT2.aspx>

ACA Code of Ethics Preamble

The American Counseling Association is an educational, scientific, and professional organization whose members work in a variety of settings and serve in multiple capacities. ACA members are dedicated to the enhancement of human development throughout the life span. Association members recognize diversity and embrace a cross-cultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts.

Professional values are an important way of living out an ethical commitment. Values inform principles. Inherently held values that guide our behaviors or exceed prescribed behaviors are deeply ingrained in the counselor and developed out of personal dedication, rather than the mandatory requirement of an external organization.

ACA Code of Ethics Purpose

The *ACA Code of Ethics* serves five main purposes:

1. The *Code* enables the association to clarify to current and future members, and to those served by members, the nature of the ethical responsibilities held in common by its members.
2. The *Code* helps support the mission of the association.
3. The *Code* establishes principles that define ethical behavior and best practices of association members.
4. The *Code* serves as an ethical guide designed to assist members in constructing a professional course of action that best serves those utilizing counseling services and best promotes the values of the counseling profession.
5. The *Code* serves as the basis for processing of ethical complaints and inquiries initiated against members of the association.

The *ACA Code of Ethics* contains eight main sections that address the following areas:

- Section A: The Counseling Relationship
- Section B: Confidentiality, Privileged Communication, and Privacy
- Section C: Professional Responsibility
- Section D: Relationships With Other Professionals
- Section E: Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation
- Section F: Supervision, Training, and Teaching
- Section G: Research and Publication
- Section H: Resolving Ethical Issues

Each section of the *ACA Code of Ethics* begins with an Introduction. The introductions to each section discuss what counselors should aspire to with regard to ethical behavior and responsibility. The Introduction helps set the tone for that particular section and provides a starting point that invites reflection on the ethical mandates contained in each part of the *ACA Code of Ethics*.

When counselors are faced with ethical dilemmas that are difficult to resolve, they are expected to engage in a carefully considered ethical decision-making process. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among counselors with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards would be applied when they conflict. While there is no specific ethical decision-making model that is most effective, counselors are expected to be familiar with a credible model of decision making that can bear public scrutiny and its application.

Through a chosen ethical decision-making process and evaluation of the context of the situation, counselors are empowered to make decisions that help expand the capacity of people to grow and develop.

A brief glossary is given to provide readers with a concise description of some of the terms used in the *ACA Code of Ethics*.

Section A

The Counseling Relationship

Introduction

Counselors encourage client growth and development in ways that foster the interest and welfare of clients and promote formation of healthy relationships. Counselors actively attempt to understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of the clients they serve. Counselors also explore their own cultural identities and how these affect their values and beliefs about the counseling process.

Counselors are encouraged to contribute to society by devoting a portion of their professional activity to services for which there is little or no financial return (pro bono publico).

A.1. Welfare of Those Served by Counselors

A.1.a. Primary Responsibility

The primary responsibility of counselors is to respect the dignity and to promote the welfare of clients.

A.1.b. Records

Counselors maintain records necessary for rendering professional services to their clients and as required by laws, regulations, or agency or institution procedures. Counselors include sufficient and timely documentation in their client records to facilitate the delivery and continuity of needed services. Counselors take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in records accurately reflects client progress and services provided. If errors are made in client records, counselors take steps to properly note the correction of such errors according to agency or institutional policies. (See A.12.g.7., B.6., B.6.g., G.2.j.)

A.1.c. Counseling Plans

Counselors and their clients work jointly in devising integrated counseling plans that offer reasonable promise of success and are consistent with abilities and circumstances of clients. Counselors and clients regularly review counseling plans to assess their continued viability and effectiveness, respecting the freedom of choice of clients. (See A.2.a., A.2.d., A.12.g.)

A.1.d. Support Network Involvement

Counselors recognize that support

networks hold various meanings in the lives of clients and consider enlisting the support, understanding, and involvement of others (e.g., religious/spiritual/community leaders, family members, friends) as positive resources, when appropriate, with client consent.

A.1.e. Employment Needs

Counselors work with their clients considering employment in jobs that are consistent with the overall abilities, vocational limitations, physical restrictions, general temperament, interest and aptitude patterns, social skills, education, general qualifications, and other relevant characteristics and needs of clients. When appropriate, counselors appropriately trained in career development will assist in the placement of clients in positions that are consistent with the interest, culture, and the welfare of clients, employers, and/or the public.

A.2. Informed Consent in the Counseling Relationship

(See A.12.g., B.5., B.6.b., E.3., E.13.b., F.1.c., G.2.a.)

A.2.a. Informed Consent

Clients have the freedom to choose whether to enter into or remain in a counseling relationship and need adequate information about the counseling process and the counselor. Counselors have an obligation to review in writing and verbally with clients the rights and responsibilities of both the counselor and the client. Informed consent is an ongoing part of the counseling process, and counselors appropriately document discussions of informed consent throughout the counseling relationship.

A.2.b. Types of Information Needed

Counselors explicitly explain to clients the nature of all services provided. They inform clients about issues such as, but not limited to, the following: the purposes, goals, techniques, procedures, limitations, potential risks, and benefits of services; the counselor's qualifications, credentials, and relevant experience; continuation of services upon the incapacitation or death of a counselor; and other pertinent information. Counselors take steps to ensure that clients understand the implications of diagnosis, the intended use of tests and reports, fees, and billing arrangements.

Clients have the right to confidentiality and to be provided with an explanation of its limitations (including how supervisors and/or treatment team professionals are involved); to obtain clear information about their records; to participate in the ongoing counseling plans; and to refuse any services or modality change and to be advised of the consequences of such refusal.

A.2.c. Developmental and Cultural Sensitivity

Counselors communicate information in ways that are both developmentally and culturally appropriate. Counselors use clear and understandable language when discussing issues related to informed consent. When clients have difficulty understanding the language used by counselors, they provide necessary services (e.g., arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator) to ensure comprehension by clients. In collaboration with clients, counselors consider cultural implications of informed consent procedures and, where possible, counselors adjust their practices accordingly.

A.2.d. Inability to Give Consent

When counseling minors or persons unable to give voluntary consent, counselors seek the assent of clients to services, and include them in decision making as appropriate. Counselors recognize the need to balance the ethical rights of clients to make choices, their capacity to give consent or assent to receive services, and parental or familial legal rights and responsibilities to protect these clients and make decisions on their behalf.

A.3. Clients Served by Others

When counselors learn that their clients are in a professional relationship with another mental health professional, they request release from clients to inform the other professionals and strive to establish positive and collaborative professional relationships.

A.4. Avoiding Harm and Imposing Values

A.4.a. Avoiding Harm

Counselors act to avoid harming their clients, trainees, and research participants and to minimize or to remedy unavoidable or unanticipated harm.

A.4.b. Personal Values

Counselors are aware of their own values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors and avoid imposing values that

are inconsistent with counseling goals. Counselors respect the diversity of clients, trainees, and research participants.

A.5. Roles and Relationships With Clients

(See *F.3.*, *F.10.*, *G.3.*)

A.5.a. Current Clients

Sexual or romantic counselor–client interactions or relationships with current clients, their romantic partners, or their family members are prohibited.

A.5.b. Former Clients

Sexual or romantic counselor–client interactions or relationships with former clients, their romantic partners, or their family members are prohibited for a period of 5 years following the last professional contact. Counselors, before engaging in sexual or romantic interactions or relationships with clients, their romantic partners, or client family members after 5 years following the last professional contact, demonstrate forethought and document (in written form) whether the interactions or relationship can be viewed as exploitive in some way and/or whether there is still potential to harm the former client; in cases of potential exploitation and/or harm, the counselor avoids entering such an interaction or relationship.

A.5.c. Nonprofessional Interactions or Relationships (Other Than Sexual or Romantic Interactions or Relationships)

Counselor–client nonprofessional relationships with clients, former clients, their romantic partners, or their family members should be avoided, except when the interaction is potentially beneficial to the client. (See *A.5.d.*)

A.5.d. Potentially Beneficial Interactions

When a counselor–client nonprofessional interaction with a client or former client may be potentially beneficial to the client or former client, the counselor must document in case records, prior to the interaction (when feasible), the rationale for such an interaction, the potential benefit, and anticipated consequences for the client or former client and other individuals significantly involved with the client or former client. Such interactions should be initiated with appropriate client consent. Where

unintentional harm occurs to the client or former client, or to an individual significantly involved with the client or former client, due to the nonprofessional interaction, the counselor must show evidence of an attempt to remedy such harm. Examples of potentially beneficial interactions include, but are not limited to, attending a formal ceremony (e.g., a wedding/commitment ceremony or graduation); purchasing a service or product provided by a client or former client (excepting unrestricted bartering); hospital visits to an ill family member; mutual membership in a professional association, organization, or community. (See *A.5.c.*)

A.5.e. Role Changes in the Professional Relationship

When a counselor changes a role from the original or most recent contracted relationship, he or she obtains informed consent from the client and explains the right of the client to refuse services related to the change. Examples of role changes include

1. changing from individual to relationship or family counseling, or vice versa;
2. changing from a nonforensic evaluative role to a therapeutic role, or vice versa;
3. changing from a counselor to a researcher role (i.e., enlisting clients as research participants), or vice versa; and
4. changing from a counselor to a mediator role, or vice versa.

Clients must be fully informed of any anticipated consequences (e.g., financial, legal, personal, or therapeutic) of counselor role changes.

A.6. Roles and Relationships at Individual, Group, Institutional, and Societal Levels

A.6.a. Advocacy

When appropriate, counselors advocate at individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to examine potential barriers and obstacles that inhibit access and/or the growth and development of clients.

A.6.b. Confidentiality and Advocacy

Counselors obtain client consent prior to engaging in advocacy efforts on behalf of an identifiable client to

improve the provision of services and to work toward removal of systemic barriers or obstacles that inhibit client access, growth, and development.

A.7. Multiple Clients

When a counselor agrees to provide counseling services to two or more persons who have a relationship, the counselor clarifies at the outset which person or persons are clients and the nature of the relationships the counselor will have with each involved person. If it becomes apparent that the counselor may be called upon to perform potentially conflicting roles, the counselor will clarify, adjust, or withdraw from roles appropriately. (See *A.8.a.*, *B.4.*)

A.8. Group Work

(See *B.4.a.*)

A.8.a. Screening

Counselors screen prospective group counseling/therapy participants. To the extent possible, counselors select members whose needs and goals are compatible with goals of the group, who will not impede the group process, and whose well-being will not be jeopardized by the group experience.

A.8.b. Protecting Clients

In a group setting, counselors take reasonable precautions to protect clients from physical, emotional, or psychological trauma.

A.9. End-of-Life Care for Terminally Ill Clients

A.9.a. Quality of Care

Counselors strive to take measures that enable clients

1. to obtain high quality end-of-life care for their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs;
2. to exercise the highest degree of self-determination possible;
3. to be given every opportunity possible to engage in informed decision making regarding their end-of-life care; and
4. to receive complete and adequate assessment regarding their ability to make competent, rational decisions on their own behalf from a mental health professional who is experienced in end-of-life care practice.

A.9.b. Counselor Competence, Choice, and Referral

Recognizing the personal, moral, and competence issues related to

end-of-life decisions, counselors may choose to work or not work with terminally ill clients who wish to explore their end-of-life options. Counselors provide appropriate referral information to ensure that clients receive the necessary help.

A.9.c. Confidentiality

Counselors who provide services to terminally ill individuals who are considering hastening their own deaths have the option of breaking or not breaking confidentiality, depending on applicable laws and the specific circumstances of the situation and after seeking consultation or supervision from appropriate professional and legal parties. (*See B.5.c., B.7.c.*)

A.10. Fees and Bartering

A.10.a. Accepting Fees From Agency Clients

Counselors refuse a private fee or other remuneration for rendering services to persons who are entitled to such services through the counselor's employing agency or institution. The policies of a particular agency may make explicit provisions for agency clients to receive counseling services from members of its staff in private practice. In such instances, the clients must be informed of other options open to them should they seek private counseling services.

A.10.b. Establishing Fees

In establishing fees for professional counseling services, counselors consider the financial status of clients and locality. In the event that the established fee structure is inappropriate for a client, counselors assist clients in attempting to find comparable services of acceptable cost.

A.10.c. Nonpayment of Fees

If counselors intend to use collection agencies or take legal measures to collect fees from clients who do not pay for services as agreed upon, they first inform clients of intended actions and offer clients the opportunity to make payment.

A.10.d. Bartering

Counselors may barter only if the relationship is not exploitive or harmful and does not place the counselor in an unfair advantage, if the client requests it, and if such arrangements are an accepted practice among professionals in the community. Counselors consider the cultural implications

of bartering and discuss relevant concerns with clients and document such agreements in a clear written contract.

A.10.e. Receiving Gifts

Counselors understand the challenges of accepting gifts from clients and recognize that in some cultures, small gifts are a token of respect and showing gratitude. When determining whether or not to accept a gift from clients, counselors take into account the therapeutic relationship, the monetary value of the gift, a client's motivation for giving the gift, and the counselor's motivation for wanting or declining the gift.

A.11. Termination and Referral

A.11.a. Abandonment Prohibited

Counselors do not abandon or neglect clients in counseling. Counselors assist in making appropriate arrangements for the continuation of treatment, when necessary, during interruptions such as vacations, illness, and following termination.

A.11.b. Inability to Assist Clients

If counselors determine an inability to be of professional assistance to clients, they avoid entering or continuing counseling relationships. Counselors are knowledgeable about culturally and clinically appropriate referral resources and suggest these alternatives. If clients decline the suggested referrals, counselors should discontinue the relationship.

A.11.c. Appropriate Termination

Counselors terminate a counseling relationship when it becomes reasonably apparent that the client no longer needs assistance, is not likely to benefit, or is being harmed by continued counseling. Counselors may terminate counseling when in jeopardy of harm by the client, or another person with whom the client has a relationship, or when clients do not pay fees as agreed upon. Counselors provide pretermination counseling and recommend other service providers when necessary.

A.11.d. Appropriate Transfer of Services

When counselors transfer or refer clients to other practitioners, they ensure that appropriate clinical and administrative processes are completed and open communication is maintained with both clients and practitioners.

A.12. Technology Applications

A.12.a. Benefits and Limitations

Counselors inform clients of the benefits and limitations of using information technology applications in the counseling process and in business/billing procedures. Such technologies include but are not limited to computer hardware and software, telephones, the World Wide Web, the Internet, online assessment instruments and other communication devices.

A.12.b. Technology-Assisted Services

When providing technology-assisted distance counseling services, counselors determine that clients are intellectually, emotionally, and physically capable of using the application and that the application is appropriate for the needs of clients.

A.12.c. Inappropriate Services

When technology-assisted distance counseling services are deemed inappropriate by the counselor or client, counselors consider delivering services face to face.

A.12.d. Access

Counselors provide reasonable access to computer applications when providing technology-assisted distance counseling services.

A.12.e. Laws and Statutes

Counselors ensure that the use of technology does not violate the laws of any local, state, national, or international entity and observe all relevant statutes.

A.12.f. Assistance

Counselors seek business, legal, and technical assistance when using technology applications, particularly when the use of such applications crosses state or national boundaries.

A.12.g. Technology and Informed Consent

As part of the process of establishing informed consent, counselors do the following:

1. Address issues related to the difficulty of maintaining the confidentiality of electronically transmitted communications.
2. Inform clients of all colleagues, supervisors, and employees, such as Informational Technology (IT) administrators, who might have authorized or unauthorized access to electronic transmissions.
3. Urge clients to be aware of all authorized or unauthorized users

- including family members and fellow employees who have access to any technology clients may use in the counseling process.
4. Inform clients of pertinent legal rights and limitations governing the practice of a profession over state lines or international boundaries.
 5. Use encrypted Web sites and e-mail communications to help ensure confidentiality when possible.
 6. When the use of encryption is not possible, counselors notify clients of this fact and limit electronic transmissions to general communications that are not client specific.
 7. Inform clients if and for how long archival storage of transaction records are maintained.
 8. Discuss the possibility of technology failure and alternate methods of service delivery.
 9. Inform clients of emergency procedures, such as calling 911 or a local crisis hotline, when the counselor is not available.
 10. Discuss time zone differences, local customs, and cultural or language differences that might impact service delivery.
 11. Inform clients when technology-assisted distance counseling services are not covered by insurance. *(See A.2.)*

A.12.h. Sites on the World Wide Web

Counselors maintaining sites on the World Wide Web (the Internet) do the following:

1. Regularly check that electronic links are working and professionally appropriate.
2. Establish ways clients can contact the counselor in case of technology failure.
3. Provide electronic links to relevant state licensure and professional certification boards to protect consumer rights and facilitate addressing ethical concerns.
4. Establish a method for verifying client identity.
5. Obtain the written consent of the legal guardian or other authorized legal representative prior to rendering services in the event the client is a minor child, an adult who is legally incompetent, or an adult incapable of giving informed consent.
6. Strive to provide a site that is accessible to persons with disabilities.
7. Strive to provide translation capabilities for clients who have a different primary language while also addressing the imperfect nature of such translations.
8. Assist clients in determining the validity and reliability of information found on the World Wide Web and other technology applications.

Section B

Confidentiality, Privileged Communication, and Privacy

Introduction

Counselors recognize that trust is a cornerstone of the counseling relationship. Counselors aspire to earn the trust of clients by creating an ongoing partnership, establishing and upholding appropriate boundaries, and maintaining confidentiality. Counselors communicate the parameters of confidentiality in a culturally competent manner.

B.1. Respecting Client Rights

B.1.a. Multicultural/Diversity Considerations

Counselors maintain awareness and sensitivity regarding cultural meanings of confidentiality and privacy. Counselors respect differing views toward disclosure of information. Counselors hold ongoing discussions with clients as to how, when, and with whom information is to be shared.

B.1.b. Respect for Privacy

Counselors respect client rights to privacy. Counselors solicit private information from clients only when it is beneficial to the counseling process.

B.1.c. Respect for Confidentiality

Counselors do not share confidential information without client consent or without sound legal or ethical justification.

B.1.d. Explanation of Limitations

At initiation and throughout the counseling process, counselors inform clients of the limitations of confidentiality and seek to identify foreseeable situations in which confidentiality must be breached. *(See A.2.b.)*

B.2. Exceptions

B.2.a. Danger and Legal Requirements

The general requirement that counselors keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is required to protect clients or identified others from serious and foreseeable harm or when legal requirements demand that confidential information must be revealed. Counselors consult with other professionals when in doubt as to the validity of an exception. Additional considerations apply when addressing end-of-life issues. *(See A.9.c.)*

B.2.b. Contagious, Life-Threatening Diseases

When clients disclose that they have a disease commonly known to be both communicable and life threatening, counselors may be justified in disclosing information to identifiable third parties, if they are known to be at demonstrable and high risk of contracting the disease. Prior to making a disclosure, counselors confirm that there is such a diagnosis and assess the intent of clients to inform the third parties about their disease or to engage in any behaviors that may be harmful to an identifiable third party.

B.2.c. Court-Ordered Disclosure

When subpoenaed to release confidential or privileged information without a client's permission, counselors obtain written, informed consent from the client or take steps to prohibit the disclosure or have it limited as narrowly as possible due to potential harm to the client or counseling relationship.

B.2.d. Minimal Disclosure

To the extent possible, clients are informed before confidential information is disclosed and are involved in the disclosure decision-making process. When circumstances require the disclosure of confidential information, only essential information is revealed.

B.3. Information Shared With Others

B.3.a. Subordinates

Counselors make every effort to ensure that privacy and confidentiality of clients are maintained by subordinates, including employees, supervisees, students, clerical assistants, and volunteers. *(See F.1.c.)*

8 ACA Code of Ethics

B.3.b. Treatment Teams

When client treatment involves a continued review or participation by a treatment team, the client will be informed of the team's existence and composition, information being shared, and the purposes of sharing such information.

B.3.c. Confidential Settings

Counselors discuss confidential information only in settings in which they can reasonably ensure client privacy.

B.3.d. Third-Party Payers

Counselors disclose information to third-party payers only when clients have authorized such disclosure.

B.3.e. Transmitting Confidential Information

Counselors take precautions to ensure the confidentiality of information transmitted through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones, voicemail, answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. (*See A.12.g.*)

B.3.f. Deceased Clients

Counselors protect the confidentiality of deceased clients, consistent with legal requirements and agency or setting policies.

B.4. Groups and Families

B.4.a. Group Work

In group work, counselors clearly explain the importance and parameters of confidentiality for the specific group being entered.

B.4.b. Couples and Family Counseling

In couples and family counseling, counselors clearly define who is considered "the client" and discuss expectations and limitations of confidentiality. Counselors seek agreement and document in writing such agreement among all involved parties having capacity to give consent concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and any obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information known.

B.5. Clients Lacking Capacity to Give Informed Consent

B.5.a. Responsibility to Clients

When counseling minor clients or adult clients who lack the capacity to give voluntary, informed consent, counselors protect the confidentiality of information received in the counseling relationship as specified by federal and state laws, written policies, and applicable ethical standards.

B.5.b. Responsibility to Parents and Legal Guardians

Counselors inform parents and legal guardians about the role of counselors and the confidential nature of the counseling relationship. Counselors are sensitive to the cultural diversity of families and respect the inherent rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians over the welfare of their children/charges according to law. Counselors work to establish, as appropriate, collaborative relationships with parents/guardians to best serve clients.

B.5.c. Release of Confidential Information

When counseling minor clients or adult clients who lack the capacity to give voluntary consent to release confidential information, counselors seek permission from an appropriate third party to disclose information. In such instances, counselors inform clients consistent with their level of understanding and take culturally appropriate measures to safeguard client confidentiality.

B.6. Records

B.6.a. Confidentiality of Records

Counselors ensure that records are kept in a secure location and that only authorized persons have access to records.

B.6.b. Permission to Record

Counselors obtain permission from clients prior to recording sessions through electronic or other means.

B.6.c. Permission to Observe

Counselors obtain permission from clients prior to observing counseling sessions, reviewing session transcripts, or viewing recordings of sessions with supervisors, faculty, peers, or others within the training environment.

B.6.d. Client Access

Counselors provide reasonable access to records and copies of records when requested by competent clients. Counselors limit the access of clients to their records, or portions of their records, only when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause harm to the client. Counselors document the request of clients and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record in the files of clients. In situations involving multiple clients, counselors provide individual clients with only those parts of records that related

directly to them and do not include confidential information related to any other client.

B.6.e. Assistance With Records

When clients request access to their records, counselors provide assistance and consultation in interpreting counseling records.

B.6.f. Disclosure or Transfer

Unless exceptions to confidentiality exist, counselors obtain written permission from clients to disclose or transfer records to legitimate third parties. Steps are taken to ensure that receivers of counseling records are sensitive to their confidential nature. (*See A.3., E.4.*)

B.6.g. Storage and Disposal After Termination

Counselors store records following termination of services to ensure reasonable future access, maintain records in accordance with state and federal statutes governing records, and dispose of client records and other sensitive materials in a manner that protects client confidentiality. When records are of an artistic nature, counselors obtain client (or guardian) consent with regards to handling of such records or documents. (*See A.1.b.*)

B.6.h. Reasonable Precautions

Counselors take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the counselor's termination of practice, incapacity, or death. (*See C.2.h.*)

B.7. Research and Training

B.7.a. Institutional Approval

When institutional approval is required, counselors provide accurate information about their research proposals and obtain approval prior to conducting their research. They conduct research in accordance with the approved research protocol.

B.7.b. Adherence to Guidelines

Counselors are responsible for understanding and adhering to state, federal, agency, or institutional policies or applicable guidelines regarding confidentiality in their research practices.

B.7.c. Confidentiality of Information Obtained in Research

Violations of participant privacy and confidentiality are risks of participation in research involving human participants. Investigators maintain all research records in a secure manner.

They explain to participants the risks of violations of privacy and confidentiality and disclose to participants any limits of confidentiality that reasonably can be expected. Regardless of the degree to which confidentiality will be maintained, investigators must disclose to participants any limits of confidentiality that reasonably can be expected. (See *G.2.e.*)

B.7.d. Disclosure of Research Information

Counselors do not disclose confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of a research participant unless they have obtained the prior consent of the person. Use of data derived from counseling relationships for purposes of training, research, or publication is confined to content that is disguised to ensure the anonymity of the individuals involved. (See *G.2.a.*, *G.2.d.*)

B.7.e. Agreement for Identification

Identification of clients, students, or supervisees in a presentation or publication is permissible only when they have reviewed the material and agreed to its presentation or publication. (See *G.4.d.*)

B.8. Consultation

B.8.a. Agreements

When acting as consultants, counselors seek agreements among all parties involved concerning each individual's rights to confidentiality, the obligation of each individual to preserve confidential information, and the limits of confidentiality of information shared by others.

B.8.b. Respect for Privacy

Information obtained in a consulting relationship is discussed for professional purposes only with persons directly involved with the case. Written and oral reports present only data germane to the purposes of the consultation, and every effort is made to protect client identity and to avoid undue invasion of privacy.

B.8.c. Disclosure of Confidential Information

When consulting with colleagues, counselors do not disclose confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of a client or other person or organization with whom they have a confidential relationship unless they have obtained the prior consent of the person or organization or the disclo-

sure cannot be avoided. They disclose information only to the extent necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation. (See *D.2.d.*)

Section C

Professional Responsibility

Introduction

Counselors aspire to open, honest, and accurate communication in dealing with the public and other professionals. They practice in a non-discriminatory manner within the boundaries of professional and personal competence and have a responsibility to abide by the *ACA Code of Ethics*. Counselors actively participate in local, state, and national associations that foster the development and improvement of counseling. Counselors advocate to promote change at the individual, group, institutional, and societal levels that improve the quality of life for individuals and groups and remove potential barriers to the provision or access of appropriate services being offered. Counselors have a responsibility to the public to engage in counseling practices that are based on rigorous research methodologies. In addition, counselors engage in self-care activities to maintain and promote their emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being to best meet their professional responsibilities.

C.1. Knowledge of Standards

Counselors have a responsibility to read, understand, and follow the *ACA Code of Ethics* and adhere to applicable laws and regulations.

C.2. Professional Competence

C.2.a. Boundaries of Competence

Counselors practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience. Counselors gain knowledge, personal awareness, sensitivity, and skills pertinent to working with a diverse client population. (See *A.9.b.*, *C.4.e.*, *E.2.*, *F.2.*, *F.11.b.*)

C.2.b. New Specialty Areas of Practice

Counselors practice in specialty areas new to them only after appropriate education, training, and supervised experience. While developing skills in new specialty areas, counselors take steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect others from possible harm. (See *F.6.f.*)

C.2.c. Qualified for Employment

Counselors accept employment only for positions for which they are qualified by education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience. Counselors hire for professional counseling positions only individuals who are qualified and competent for those positions.

C.2.d. Monitor Effectiveness

Counselors continually monitor their effectiveness as professionals and take steps to improve when necessary. Counselors in private practice take reasonable steps to seek peer supervision as needed to evaluate their efficacy as counselors.

C.2.e. Consultation on Ethical Obligations

Counselors take reasonable steps to consult with other counselors or related professionals when they have questions regarding their ethical obligations or professional practice.

C.2.f. Continuing Education

Counselors recognize the need for continuing education to acquire and maintain a reasonable level of awareness of current scientific and professional information in their fields of activity. They take steps to maintain competence in the skills they use, are open to new procedures, and keep current with the diverse populations and specific populations with whom they work.

C.2.g. Impairment

Counselors are alert to the signs of impairment from their own physical, mental, or emotional problems and refrain from offering or providing professional services when such impairment is likely to harm a client or others. They seek assistance for problems that reach the level of professional impairment, and, if necessary, they limit, suspend, or terminate their professional responsibilities until such time it is determined that they may safely resume their work. Counselors assist colleagues or supervisors in recognizing their own professional impairment

10 ACA Code of Ethics

and provide consultation and assistance when warranted with colleagues or supervisors showing signs of impairment and intervene as appropriate to prevent imminent harm to clients. (*See A.11.b., F.8.b.*)

C.2.h. Counselor Incapacitation or Termination of Practice

When counselors leave a practice, they follow a prepared plan for transfer of clients and files. Counselors prepare and disseminate to an identified colleague or “records custodian” a plan for the transfer of clients and files in the case of their incapacitation, death, or termination of practice.

C.3. Advertising and Soliciting Clients

C.3.a. Accurate Advertising

When advertising or otherwise representing their services to the public, counselors identify their credentials in an accurate manner that is not false, misleading, deceptive, or fraudulent.

C.3.b. Testimonials

Counselors who use testimonials do not solicit them from current clients nor former clients nor any other persons who may be vulnerable to undue influence.

C.3.c. Statements by Others

Counselors make reasonable efforts to ensure that statements made by others about them or the profession of counseling are accurate.

C.3.d. Recruiting Through Employment

Counselors do not use their places of employment or institutional affiliation to recruit or gain clients, supervisees, or consultees for their private practices.

C.3.e. Products and Training Advertisements

Counselors who develop products related to their profession or conduct workshops or training events ensure that the advertisements concerning these products or events are accurate and disclose adequate information for consumers to make informed choices. (*See C.6.d.*)

C.3.f. Promoting to Those Served

Counselors do not use counseling, teaching, training, or supervisory relationships to promote their products or training events in a manner that is deceptive or would exert undue influence on individuals who may be vulnerable. However, coun-

selor educators may adopt textbooks they have authored for instructional purposes.

C.4. Professional Qualifications

C.4.a. Accurate Representation

Counselors claim or imply only professional qualifications actually completed and correct any known misrepresentations of their qualifications by others. Counselors truthfully represent the qualifications of their professional colleagues. Counselors clearly distinguish between paid and volunteer work experience and accurately describe their continuing education and specialized training. (*See C.2.a.*)

C.4.b. Credentials

Counselors claim only licenses or certifications that are current and in good standing.

C.4.c. Educational Degrees

Counselors clearly differentiate between earned and honorary degrees.

C.4.d. Implying Doctoral-Level Competence

Counselors clearly state their highest earned degree in counseling or closely related field. Counselors do not imply doctoral-level competence when only possessing a master’s degree in counseling or a related field by referring to themselves as “Dr.” in a counseling context when their doctorate is not in counseling or related field.

C.4.e. Program Accreditation Status

Counselors clearly state the accreditation status of their degree programs at the time the degree was earned.

C.4.f. Professional Membership

Counselors clearly differentiate between current, active memberships and former memberships in associations. Members of the American Counseling Association must clearly differentiate between professional membership, which implies the possession of at least a master’s degree in counseling, and regular membership, which is open to individuals whose interests and activities are consistent with those of ACA but are not qualified for professional membership.

C.5. Nondiscrimination

Counselors do not condone or engage in discrimination based on age, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status/partnership, language preference,

socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law. Counselors do not discriminate against clients, students, employees, supervisees, or research participants in a manner that has a negative impact on these persons.

C.6. Public Responsibility

C.6.a. Sexual Harassment

Counselors do not engage in or condone sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that occurs in connection with professional activities or roles, and that either

1. is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile workplace or learning environment, and counselors know or are told this; or
2. is sufficiently severe or intense to be perceived as harassment to a reasonable person in the context in which the behavior occurred.

Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or multiple persistent or pervasive acts.

C.6.b. Reports to Third Parties

Counselors are accurate, honest, and objective in reporting their professional activities and judgments to appropriate third parties, including courts, health insurance companies, those who are the recipients of evaluation reports, and others. (*See B.3., E.4.*)

C.6.c. Media Presentations

When counselors provide advice or comment by means of public lectures, demonstrations, radio or television programs, prerecorded tapes, technology-based applications, printed articles, mailed material, or other media, they take reasonable precautions to ensure that

1. the statements are based on appropriate professional counseling literature and practice,
2. the statements are otherwise consistent with the *ACA Code of Ethics*, and
3. the recipients of the information are not encouraged to infer that a professional counseling relationship has been established.

C.6.d. Exploitation of Others

Counselors do not exploit others in their professional relationships. (*See C.3.e.*)

C.6.e. Scientific Bases for Treatment Modalities

Counselors use techniques/procedures/modalities that are grounded in

theory and/or have an empirical or scientific foundation. Counselors who do not must define the techniques/procedures as “unproven” or “developing” and explain the potential risks and ethical considerations of using such techniques/procedures and take steps to protect clients from possible harm. (*See A.4.a., E.5.c., E.5.d.*)

C.7. Responsibility to Other Professionals

C.7.a. Personal Public Statements

When making personal statements in a public context, counselors clarify that they are speaking from their personal perspectives and that they are not speaking on behalf of all counselors or the profession.

Section D

Relationships With Other Professionals

Introduction

Professional counselors recognize that the quality of their interactions with colleagues can influence the quality of services provided to clients. They work to become knowledgeable about colleagues within and outside the field of counseling. Counselors develop positive working relationships and systems of communication with colleagues to enhance services to clients.

D.1. Relationships With Colleagues, Employers, and Employees

D.1.a. Different Approaches

Counselors are respectful of approaches to counseling services that differ from their own. Counselors are respectful of traditions and practices of other professional groups with which they work.

D.1.b. Forming Relationships

Counselors work to develop and strengthen interdisciplinary relations with colleagues from other disciplines to best serve clients.

D.1.c. Interdisciplinary Teamwork

Counselors who are members of interdisciplinary teams delivering multifaceted services to clients, keep the focus on how to best serve the clients.

They participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the counseling profession and those of colleagues from other disciplines. (*See A.1.a.*)

D.1.d. Confidentiality

When counselors are required by law, institutional policy, or extraordinary circumstances to serve in more than one role in judicial or administrative proceedings, they clarify role expectations and the parameters of confidentiality with their colleagues. (*See B.1.c., B.1.d., B.2.c., B.2.d., B.3.b.*)

D.1.e. Establishing Professional and Ethical Obligations

Counselors who are members of interdisciplinary teams clarify professional and ethical obligations of the team as a whole and of its individual members. When a team decision raises ethical concerns, counselors first attempt to resolve the concern within the team. If they cannot reach resolution among team members, counselors pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with client well-being.

D.1.f. Personnel Selection and Assignment

Counselors select competent staff and assign responsibilities compatible with their skills and experiences.

D.1.g. Employer Policies

The acceptance of employment in an agency or institution implies that counselors are in agreement with its general policies and principles. Counselors strive to reach agreement with employers as to acceptable standards of conduct that allow for changes in institutional policy conducive to the growth and development of clients.

D.1.h. Negative Conditions

Counselors alert their employers of inappropriate policies and practices. They attempt to effect changes in such policies or procedures through constructive action within the organization. When such policies are potentially disruptive or damaging to clients or may limit the effectiveness of services provided and change cannot be effected, counselors take appropriate further action. Such action may include referral to appropriate certification, accreditation, or state licensure organizations, or voluntary termination of employment.

D.1.i. Protection From Punitive Action

Counselors take care not to harass or dismiss an employee who has acted in a responsible and ethical manner

to expose inappropriate employer policies or practices.

D.2. Consultation

D.2.a. Consultant Competency

Counselors take reasonable steps to ensure that they have the appropriate resources and competencies when providing consultation services. Counselors provide appropriate referral resources when requested or needed. (*See C.2.a.*)

D.2.b. Understanding Consultees

When providing consultation, counselors attempt to develop with their consultees a clear understanding of problem definition, goals for change, and predicted consequences of interventions selected.

D.2.c. Consultant Goals

The consulting relationship is one in which consultee adaptability and growth toward self-direction are consistently encouraged and cultivated.

D.2.d. Informed Consent in Consultation

When providing consultation, counselors have an obligation to review, in writing and verbally, the rights and responsibilities of both counselors and consultees. Counselors use clear and understandable language to inform all parties involved about the purpose of the services to be provided, relevant costs, potential risks and benefits, and the limits of confidentiality. Working in conjunction with the consultee, counselors attempt to develop a clear definition of the problem, goals for change, and predicted consequences of interventions that are culturally responsive and appropriate to the needs of consultees. (*See A.2.a., A.2.b.*)

Section E

Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation

Introduction

Counselors use assessment instruments as one component of the counseling process, taking into account the client personal and cultural context. Counselors promote the well-being of individual clients or groups of clients by developing and using appropriate educational, psychological, and career assessment instruments.

12 ACA Code of Ethics

E.1. General

E.1.a. Assessment

The primary purpose of educational, psychological, and career assessment is to provide measurements that are valid and reliable in either comparative or absolute terms. These include, but are not limited to, measurements of ability, personality, interest, intelligence, achievement, and performance. Counselors recognize the need to interpret the statements in this section as applying to both quantitative and qualitative assessments.

E.1.b. Client Welfare

Counselors do not misuse assessment results and interpretations, and they take reasonable steps to prevent others from misusing the information these techniques provide. They respect the client's right to know the results, the interpretations made, and the bases for counselors' conclusions and recommendations.

E.2. Competence to Use and Interpret Assessment Instruments

E.2.a. Limits of Competence

Counselors utilize only those testing and assessment services for which they have been trained and are competent. Counselors using technology assisted test interpretations are trained in the construct being measured and the specific instrument being used prior to using its technology based application. Counselors take reasonable measures to ensure the proper use of psychological and career assessment techniques by persons under their supervision. (*See A.12.*)

E.2.b. Appropriate Use

Counselors are responsible for the appropriate application, scoring, interpretation, and use of assessment instruments relevant to the needs of the client, whether they score and interpret such assessments themselves or use technology or other services.

E.2.c. Decisions Based on Results

Counselors responsible for decisions involving individuals or policies that are based on assessment results have a thorough understanding of educational, psychological, and career measurement, including validation criteria, assessment research, and guidelines for assessment development and use.

E.3. Informed Consent in Assessment

E.3.a. Explanation to Clients

Prior to assessment, counselors explain the nature and purposes of assessment and the specific use of results by potential recipients. The explanation will be given in the language of the client (or other legally authorized person on behalf of the client), unless an explicit exception has been agreed upon in advance. Counselors consider the client's personal or cultural context, the level of the client's understanding of the results, and the impact of the results on the client. (*See A.2., A.12.g., F.1.c.*)

E.3.b. Recipients of Results

Counselors consider the examinee's welfare, explicit understandings, and prior agreements in determining who receives the assessment results. Counselors include accurate and appropriate interpretations with any release of individual or group assessment results. (*See B.2.c., B.5.*)

E.4. Release of Data to Qualified Professionals

Counselors release assessment data in which the client is identified only with the consent of the client or the client's legal representative. Such data are released only to persons recognized by counselors as qualified to interpret the data. (*See B.1., B.3., B.6.b.*)

E.5. Diagnosis of Mental Disorders

E.5.a. Proper Diagnosis

Counselors take special care to provide proper diagnosis of mental disorders. Assessment techniques (including personal interview) used to determine client care (e.g., locus of treatment, type of treatment, or recommended follow-up) are carefully selected and appropriately used.

E.5.b. Cultural Sensitivity

Counselors recognize that culture affects the manner in which clients' problems are defined. Clients' socioeconomic and cultural experiences are considered when diagnosing mental disorders. (*See A.2.c.*)

E.5.c. Historical and Social Prejudices in the Diagnosis of Pathology

Counselors recognize historical and social prejudices in the misdiagnosis and pathologizing of certain indi-

viduals and groups and the role of mental health professionals in perpetuating these prejudices through diagnosis and treatment.

E.5.d. Refraining From Diagnosis

Counselors may refrain from making and/or reporting a diagnosis if they believe it would cause harm to the client or others.

E.6. Instrument Selection

E.6.a. Appropriateness of Instruments

Counselors carefully consider the validity, reliability, psychometric limitations, and appropriateness of instruments when selecting assessments.

E.6.b. Referral Information

If a client is referred to a third party for assessment, the counselor provides specific referral questions and sufficient objective data about the client to ensure that appropriate assessment instruments are utilized. (*See A.9.b., B.3.*)

E.6.c. Culturally Diverse Populations

Counselors are cautious when selecting assessments for culturally diverse populations to avoid the use of instruments that lack appropriate psychometric properties for the client population. (*See A.2.c., E.5.b.*)

E.7. Conditions of Assessment Administration

(*See A.12.b., A.12.d.*)

E.7.a. Administration Conditions

Counselors administer assessments under the same conditions that were established in their standardization. When assessments are not administered under standard conditions, as may be necessary to accommodate clients with disabilities, or when unusual behavior or irregularities occur during the administration, those conditions are noted in interpretation, and the results may be designated as invalid or of questionable validity.

E.7.b. Technological Administration

Counselors ensure that administration programs function properly and provide clients with accurate results when technological or other electronic methods are used for assessment administration.

E.7.c. Unsupervised Assessments

Unless the assessment instrument is designed, intended, and validated for self-administration and/or scoring,

counselors do not permit inadequately supervised use.

E.7.d. Disclosure of Favorable Conditions

Prior to administration of assessments, conditions that produce most favorable assessment results are made known to the examinee.

E.8. Multicultural Issues/ Diversity in Assessment

Counselors use with caution assessment techniques that were normed on populations other than that of the client. Counselors recognize the effects of age, color, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, language preference, religion, spirituality, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status on test administration and interpretation, and place test results in proper perspective with other relevant factors. (*See A.2.c., E.5.b.*)

E.9. Scoring and Interpretation of Assessments

E.9.a. Reporting

In reporting assessment results, counselors indicate reservations that exist regarding validity or reliability due to circumstances of the assessment or the inappropriateness of the norms for the person tested.

E.9.b. Research Instruments

Counselors exercise caution when interpreting the results of research instruments not having sufficient technical data to support respondent results. The specific purposes for the use of such instruments are stated explicitly to the examinee.

E.9.c. Assessment Services

Counselors who provide assessment scoring and interpretation services to support the assessment process confirm the validity of such interpretations. They accurately describe the purpose, norms, validity, reliability, and applications of the procedures and any special qualifications applicable to their use. The public offering of an automated test interpretations service is considered a professional-to-professional consultation. The formal responsibility of the consultant is to the consultee, but the ultimate and overriding responsibility is to the client. (*See D.2.*)

E.10. Assessment Security

Counselors maintain the integrity and security of tests and other assessment

techniques consistent with legal and contractual obligations. Counselors do not appropriate, reproduce, or modify published assessments or parts thereof without acknowledgment and permission from the publisher.

E.11. Obsolete Assessments and Outdated Results

Counselors do not use data or results from assessments that are obsolete or outdated for the current purpose. Counselors make every effort to prevent the misuse of obsolete measures and assessment data by others.

E.12. Assessment Construction

Counselors use established scientific procedures, relevant standards, and current professional knowledge for assessment design in the development, publication, and utilization of educational and psychological assessment techniques.

E.13. Forensic Evaluation: Evaluation for Legal Proceedings

E.13.a. Primary Obligations

When providing forensic evaluations, the primary obligation of counselors is to produce objective findings that can be substantiated based on information and techniques appropriate to the evaluation, which may include examination of the individual and/or review of records. Counselors are entitled to form professional opinions based on their professional knowledge and expertise that can be supported by the data gathered in evaluations. Counselors will define the limits of their reports or testimony, especially when an examination of the individual has not been conducted.

E.13.b. Consent for Evaluation

Individuals being evaluated are informed in writing that the relationship is for the purposes of an evaluation and is not counseling in nature, and entities or individuals who will receive the evaluation report are identified. Written consent to be evaluated is obtained from those being evaluated unless a court orders evaluations to be conducted without the written consent of individuals being evaluated. When children or vulnerable adults are being evaluated, informed written

consent is obtained from a parent or guardian.

E.13.c. Client Evaluation Prohibited

Counselors do not evaluate individuals for forensic purposes they currently counsel or individuals they have counseled in the past. Counselors do not accept as counseling clients individuals they are evaluating or individuals they have evaluated in the past for forensic purposes.

E.13.d. Avoid Potentially Harmful Relationships

Counselors who provide forensic evaluations avoid potentially harmful professional or personal relationships with family members, romantic partners, and close friends of individuals they are evaluating or have evaluated in the past.

Section F

Supervision, Training, and Teaching

Introduction

Counselors aspire to foster meaningful and respectful professional relationships and to maintain appropriate boundaries with supervisees and students. Counselors have theoretical and pedagogical foundations for their work and aim to be fair, accurate, and honest in their assessments of counselors-in-training.

F.1. Counselor Supervision and Client Welfare

F.1.a. Client Welfare

A primary obligation of counseling supervisors is to monitor the services provided by other counselors or counselors-in-training. Counseling supervisors monitor client welfare and supervisee clinical performance and professional development. To fulfill these obligations, supervisors meet regularly with supervisees to review case notes, samples of clinical work, or live observations. Supervisees have a responsibility to understand and follow the *ACA Code of Ethics*.

F.1.b. Counselor Credentials

Counseling supervisors work to ensure that clients are aware of the qualifications of the supervisees who render services to the clients. (*See A.2.b.*)

14 ACA Code of Ethics

F.1.c. Informed Consent and Client Rights

Supervisors make supervisees aware of client rights including the protection of client privacy and confidentiality in the counseling relationship. Supervisees provide clients with professional disclosure information and inform them of how the supervision process influences the limits of confidentiality. Supervisees make clients aware of who will have access to records of the counseling relationship and how these records will be used. (*See A.2.b., B.1.d.*)

F.2. Counselor Supervision Competence

F.2.a. Supervisor Preparation

Prior to offering clinical supervision services, counselors are trained in supervision methods and techniques. Counselors who offer clinical supervision services regularly pursue continuing education activities including both counseling and supervision topics and skills. (*See C.2.a., C.2.f.*)

F.2.b. Multicultural Issues/Diversity in Supervision

Counseling supervisors are aware of and address the role of multiculturalism/diversity in the supervisory relationship.

F.3. Supervisory Relationships

F.3.a. Relationship Boundaries With Supervisees

Counseling supervisors clearly define and maintain ethical professional, personal, and social relationships with their supervisees. Counseling supervisors avoid nonprofessional relationships with current supervisees. If supervisors must assume other professional roles (e.g., clinical and administrative supervisor, instructor) with supervisees, they work to minimize potential conflicts and explain to supervisees the expectations and responsibilities associated with each role. They do not engage in any form of nonprofessional interaction that may compromise the supervisory relationship.

F.3.b. Sexual Relationships

Sexual or romantic interactions or relationships with current supervisees are prohibited.

F.3.c. Sexual Harassment

Counseling supervisors do not condone or subject supervisees to sexual harassment. (*See C.6.a.*)

F.3.d. Close Relatives and Friends

Counseling supervisors avoid accepting close relatives, romantic partners, or friends as supervisees.

F.3.e. Potentially Beneficial Relationships

Counseling supervisors are aware of the power differential in their relationships with supervisees. If they believe nonprofessional relationships with a supervisee may be potentially beneficial to the supervisee, they take precautions similar to those taken by counselors when working with clients. Examples of potentially beneficial interactions or relationships include attending a formal ceremony; hospital visits; providing support during a stressful event; or mutual membership in a professional association, organization, or community. Counseling supervisors engage in open discussions with supervisees when they consider entering into relationships with them outside of their roles as clinical and/or administrative supervisors. Before engaging in nonprofessional relationships, supervisors discuss with supervisees and document the rationale for such interactions, potential benefits or drawbacks, and anticipated consequences for the supervisee. Supervisors clarify the specific nature and limitations of the additional role(s) they will have with the supervisee.

F.4. Supervisor Responsibilities

F.4.a. Informed Consent for Supervision

Supervisors are responsible for incorporating into their supervision the principles of informed consent and participation. Supervisors inform supervisees of the policies and procedures to which they are to adhere and the mechanisms for due process appeal of individual supervisory actions.

F.4.b. Emergencies and Absences

Supervisors establish and communicate to supervisees procedures for contacting them or, in their absence, alternative on-call supervisors to assist in handling crises.

F.4.c. Standards for Supervisees

Supervisors make their supervisees aware of professional and ethical standards and legal responsibilities. Supervisors of postdegree counselors encourage these counselors to adhere to professional standards of practice. (*See C.1.*)

F.4.d. Termination of the

Supervisory Relationship

Supervisors or supervisees have the right to terminate the supervisory

relationship with adequate notice. Reasons for withdrawal are provided to the other party. When cultural, clinical, or professional issues are crucial to the viability of the supervisory relationship, both parties make efforts to resolve differences. When termination is warranted, supervisors make appropriate referrals to possible alternative supervisors.

F.5. Counseling Supervision Evaluation, Remediation, and Endorsement

F.5.a. Evaluation

Supervisors document and provide supervisees with ongoing performance appraisal and evaluation feedback and schedule periodic formal evaluative sessions throughout the supervisory relationship.

F.5.b. Limitations

Through ongoing evaluation and appraisal, supervisors are aware of the limitations of supervisees that might impede performance. Supervisors assist supervisees in securing remedial assistance when needed. They recommend dismissal from training programs, applied counseling settings, or state or voluntary professional credentialing processes when those supervisees are unable to provide competent professional services. Supervisors seek consultation and document their decisions to dismiss or refer supervisees for assistance. They ensure that supervisees are aware of options available to them to address such decisions. (*See C.2.g.*)

F.5.c. Counseling for Supervisees

If supervisees request counseling, supervisors provide them with acceptable referrals. Counselors do not provide counseling services to supervisees. Supervisors address interpersonal competencies in terms of the impact of these issues on clients, the supervisory relationship, and professional functioning. (*See F.3.a.*)

F.5.d. Endorsement

Supervisors endorse supervisees for certification, licensure, employment, or completion of an academic or training program only when they believe supervisees are qualified for the endorsement. Regardless of qualifications, supervisors do not endorse supervisees whom they believe to be impaired in any way that would interfere with the performance of the duties associated with the endorsement.

F.6. Responsibilities of Counselor Educators

F.6.a. Counselor Educators

Counselor educators who are responsible for developing, implementing, and supervising educational programs are skilled as teachers and practitioners. They are knowledgeable regarding the ethical, legal, and regulatory aspects of the profession, are skilled in applying that knowledge, and make students and supervisees aware of their responsibilities. Counselor educators conduct counselor education and training programs in an ethical manner and serve as role models for professional behavior. (*See C.1., C.2.a., C.2.c.*)

F.6.b. Infusing Multicultural Issues/Diversity

Counselor educators infuse material related to multiculturalism/diversity into all courses and workshops for the development of professional counselors.

F.6.c. Integration of Study and Practice

Counselor educators establish education and training programs that integrate academic study and supervised practice.

F.6.d. Teaching Ethics

Counselor educators make students and supervisees aware of the ethical responsibilities and standards of the profession and the ethical responsibilities of students to the profession. Counselor educators infuse ethical considerations throughout the curriculum. (*See C.1.*)

F.6.e. Peer Relationships

Counselor educators make every effort to ensure that the rights of peers are not compromised when students or supervisees lead counseling groups or provide clinical supervision. Counselor educators take steps to ensure that students and supervisees understand they have the same ethical obligations as counselor educators, trainers, and supervisors.

F.6.f. Innovative Theories and Techniques

When counselor educators teach counseling techniques/procedures that are innovative, without an empirical foundation, or without a well-grounded theoretical foundation, they define the counseling techniques/procedures as “unproven” or “developing” and explain to students the potential risks and ethical considerations of using such techniques/procedures.

F.6.g. Field Placements

Counselor educators develop clear policies within their training programs regarding field placement and other clinical experiences. Counselor educators provide clearly stated roles and responsibilities for the student or supervisee, the site supervisor, and the program supervisor. They confirm that site supervisors are qualified to provide supervision and inform site supervisors of their professional and ethical responsibilities in this role.

F.6.h. Professional Disclosure

Before initiating counseling services, counselors-in-training disclose their status as students and explain how this status affects the limits of confidentiality. Counselor educators ensure that the clients at field placements are aware of the services rendered and the qualifications of the students and supervisees rendering those services. Students and supervisees obtain client permission before they use any information concerning the counseling relationship in the training process. (*See A.2.b.*)

F.7. Student Welfare

F.7.a. Orientation

Counselor educators recognize that orientation is a developmental process that continues throughout the educational and clinical training of students. Counseling faculty provide prospective students with information about the counselor education program’s expectations:

1. the type and level of skill and knowledge acquisition required for successful completion of the training;
2. program training goals, objectives, and mission, and subject matter to be covered;
3. bases for evaluation;
4. training components that encourage self-growth or self-disclosure as part of the training process;
5. the type of supervision settings and requirements of the sites for required clinical field experiences;
6. student and supervisee evaluation and dismissal policies and procedures; and
7. up-to-date employment prospects for graduates.

F.7.b. Self-Growth Experiences

Counselor education programs delineate requirements for self-disclosure or self-growth experiences in their

admission and program materials. Counselor educators use professional judgment when designing training experiences they conduct that require student and supervisee self-growth or self-disclosure. Students and supervisees are made aware of the ramifications their self-disclosure may have when counselors whose primary role as teacher, trainer, or supervisor requires acting on ethical obligations to the profession. Evaluative components of experiential training experiences explicitly delineate predetermined academic standards that are separate and do not depend on the student’s level of self-disclosure. Counselor educators may require trainees to seek professional help to address any personal concerns that may be affecting their competency.

F.8. Student Responsibilities

F.8.a. Standards for Students

Counselors-in-training have a responsibility to understand and follow the *ACA Code of Ethics* and adhere to applicable laws, regulatory policies, and rules and policies governing professional staff behavior at the agency or placement setting. Students have the same obligation to clients as those required of professional counselors. (*See C.1., H.1.*)

F.8.b. Impairment

Counselors-in-training refrain from offering or providing counseling services when their physical, mental, or emotional problems are likely to harm a client or others. They are alert to the signs of impairment, seek assistance for problems, and notify their program supervisors when they are aware that they are unable to effectively provide services. In addition, they seek appropriate professional services for themselves to remediate the problems that are interfering with their ability to provide services to others. (*See A.1., C.2.d., C.2.g.*)

F.9. Evaluation and Remediation of Students

F.9.a. Evaluation

Counselors clearly state to students, prior to and throughout the training program, the levels of competency expected, appraisal methods, and timing of evaluations for both didactic and clinical competencies. Counselor educators provide students

16 ACA Code of Ethics

with ongoing performance appraisal and evaluation feedback throughout the training program.

F.9.b. Limitations

Counselor educators, throughout ongoing evaluation and appraisal, are aware of and address the inability of some students to achieve counseling competencies that might impede performance. Counselor educators

1. assist students in securing remedial assistance when needed,
2. seek professional consultation and document their decision to dismiss or refer students for assistance, and
3. ensure that students have recourse in a timely manner to address decisions to require them to seek assistance or to dismiss them and provide students with due process according to institutional policies and procedures. (See C.2.g.)

F.9.c. Counseling for Students

If students request counseling or if counseling services are required as part of a remediation process, counselor educators provide acceptable referrals.

F. 10. Roles and Relationships Between Counselor Educators and Students

F.10.a. Sexual or Romantic Relationships

Sexual or romantic interactions or relationships with current students are prohibited.

F.10.b. Sexual Harassment

Counselor educators do not condone or subject students to sexual harassment. (See C.6.a.)

F.10.c. Relationships With Former Students

Counselor educators are aware of the power differential in the relationship between faculty and students. Faculty members foster open discussions with former students when considering engaging in a social, sexual, or other intimate relationship. Faculty members discuss with the former student how their former relationship may affect the change in relationship.

F.10.d. Nonprofessional Relationships

Counselor educators avoid nonprofessional or ongoing professional relationships with students in which

there is a risk of potential harm to the student or that may compromise the training experience or grades assigned. In addition, counselor educators do not accept any form of professional services, fees, commissions, reimbursement, or remuneration from a site for student or supervisee placement.

F.10.e. Counseling Services

Counselor educators do not serve as counselors to current students unless this is a brief role associated with a training experience.

F.10.f. Potentially Beneficial Relationships

Counselor educators are aware of the power differential in the relationship between faculty and students. If they believe a nonprofessional relationship with a student may be potentially beneficial to the student, they take precautions similar to those taken by counselors when working with clients. Examples of potentially beneficial interactions or relationships include, but are not limited to, attending a formal ceremony; hospital visits; providing support during a stressful event; or mutual membership in a professional association, organization, or community. Counselor educators engage in open discussions with students when they consider entering into relationships with students outside of their roles as teachers and supervisors. They discuss with students the rationale for such interactions, the potential benefits and drawbacks, and the anticipated consequences for the student. Educators clarify the specific nature and limitations of the additional role(s) they will have with the student prior to engaging in a nonprofessional relationship. Nonprofessional relationships with students should be time-limited and initiated with student consent.

F.11. Multicultural/Diversity Competence in Counselor Education and Training Programs

F.11.a. Faculty Diversity

Counselor educators are committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty.

F.11.b. Student Diversity

Counselor educators actively attempt to recruit and retain a diverse student body. Counselor educators

demonstrate commitment to multicultural/diversity competence by recognizing and valuing diverse cultures and types of abilities students bring to the training experience. Counselor educators provide appropriate accommodations that enhance and support diverse student well-being and academic performance.

F.11.c. Multicultural/Diversity Competence

Counselor educators actively infuse multicultural/diversity competency in their training and supervision practices. They actively train students to gain awareness, knowledge, and skills in the competencies of multicultural practice. Counselor educators include case examples, role-plays, discussion questions, and other classroom activities that promote and represent various cultural perspectives.

Section G

Research and Publication

Introduction

Counselors who conduct research are encouraged to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession and promote a clearer understanding of the conditions that lead to a healthy and more just society. Counselors support efforts of researchers by participating fully and willingly whenever possible. Counselors minimize bias and respect diversity in designing and implementing research programs.

G.1. Research Responsibilities**G.1.a. Use of Human Research Participants**

Counselors plan, design, conduct, and report research in a manner that is consistent with pertinent ethical principles, federal and state laws, host institutional regulations, and scientific standards governing research with human research participants.

G.1.b. Deviation From Standard Practice

Counselors seek consultation and observe stringent safeguards to protect the rights of research participants when a research problem suggests a deviation from standard or acceptable practices.

G.1.c. Independent Researchers

When independent researchers do not have access to an Institutional Review Board (IRB), they should consult with researchers who are familiar with IRB procedures to provide appropriate safeguards.

G.1.d. Precautions to Avoid Injury

Counselors who conduct research with human participants are responsible for the welfare of participants throughout the research process and should take reasonable precautions to avoid causing injurious psychological, emotional, physical, or social effects to participants.

G.1.e. Principal Researcher Responsibility

The ultimate responsibility for ethical research practice lies with the principal researcher. All others involved in the research activities share ethical obligations and responsibility for their own actions.

G.1.f. Minimal Interference

Counselors take reasonable precautions to avoid causing disruptions in the lives of research participants that could be caused by their involvement in research.

G.1.g. Multicultural/Diversity Considerations in Research

When appropriate to research goals, counselors are sensitive to incorporating research procedures that take into account cultural considerations. They seek consultation when appropriate.

G.2. Rights of Research Participants

(See A.2, A.7.)

G.2.a. Informed Consent in Research

Individuals have the right to consent to become research participants. In seeking consent, counselors use language that

1. accurately explains the purpose and procedures to be followed,
2. identifies any procedures that are experimental or relatively untried,
3. describes any attendant discomforts and risks,
4. describes any benefits or changes in individuals or organizations that might be reasonably expected,
5. discloses appropriate alternative procedures that would be advantageous for participants,
6. offers to answer any inquiries concerning the procedures,
7. describes any limitations on confidentiality,

8. describes the format and potential target audiences for the dissemination of research findings, and

9. instructs participants that they are free to withdraw their consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time without penalty.

G.2.b. Deception

Counselors do not conduct research involving deception unless alternative procedures are not feasible and the prospective value of the research justifies the deception. If such deception has the potential to cause physical or emotional harm to research participants, the research is not conducted, regardless of prospective value. When the methodological requirements of a study necessitate concealment or deception, the investigator explains the reasons for this action as soon as possible during the debriefing.

G.2.c. Student/Supervisee Participation

Researchers who involve students or supervisees in research make clear to them that the decision regarding whether or not to participate in research activities does not affect one's academic standing or supervisory relationship. Students or supervisees who choose not to participate in educational research are provided with an appropriate alternative to fulfill their academic or clinical requirements.

G.2.d. Client Participation

Counselors conducting research involving clients make clear in the informed consent process that clients are free to choose whether or not to participate in research activities. Counselors take necessary precautions to protect clients from adverse consequences of declining or withdrawing from participation.

G.2.e. Confidentiality of Information

Information obtained about research participants during the course of an investigation is confidential. When the possibility exists that others may obtain access to such information, ethical research practice requires that the possibility, together with the plans for protecting confidentiality, be explained to participants as a part of the procedure for obtaining informed consent.

G.2.f. Persons Not Capable of Giving Informed Consent

When a person is not capable of giving informed consent, counselors

provide an appropriate explanation to, obtain agreement for participation from, and obtain the appropriate consent of a legally authorized person.

G.2.g. Commitments to Participants

Counselors take reasonable measures to honor all commitments to research participants. (See A.2.c.)

G.2.h. Explanations After Data Collection

After data are collected, counselors provide participants with full clarification of the nature of the study to remove any misconceptions participants might have regarding the research. Where scientific or human values justify delaying or withholding information, counselors take reasonable measures to avoid causing harm.

G.2.i. Informing Sponsors

Counselors inform sponsors, institutions, and publication channels regarding research procedures and outcomes. Counselors ensure that appropriate bodies and authorities are given pertinent information and acknowledgement.

G.2.j. Disposal of Research Documents and Records

Within a reasonable period of time following the completion of a research project or study, counselors take steps to destroy records or documents (audio, video, digital, and written) containing confidential data or information that identifies research participants. When records are of an artistic nature, researchers obtain participant consent with regard to handling of such records or documents. (See B.4.a, B.4.g.)

G.3. Relationships With Research Participants (When Research Involves Intensive or Extended Interactions)**G.3.a. Nonprofessional Relationships**

Nonprofessional relationships with research participants should be avoided.

G.3.b. Relationships With Research Participants

Sexual or romantic counselor–research participant interactions or relationships with current research participants are prohibited.

G.3.c. Sexual Harassment and Research Participants

Researchers do not condone or subject research participants to sexual harassment.

18 ACA Code of Ethics

G.3.d. Potentially Beneficial Interactions

When a nonprofessional interaction between the researcher and the research participant may be potentially beneficial, the researcher must document, prior to the interaction (when feasible), the rationale for such an interaction, the potential benefit, and anticipated consequences for the research participant. Such interactions should be initiated with appropriate consent of the research participant. Where unintentional harm occurs to the research participant due to the nonprofessional interaction, the researcher must show evidence of an attempt to remedy such harm.

G.4. Reporting Results**G.4.a. Accurate Results**

Counselors plan, conduct, and report research accurately. They provide thorough discussions of the limitations of their data and alternative hypotheses. Counselors do not engage in misleading or fraudulent research, distort data, misrepresent data, or deliberately bias their results. They explicitly mention all variables and conditions known to the investigator that may have affected the outcome of a study or the interpretation of data. They describe the extent to which results are applicable for diverse populations.

G.4.b. Obligation to Report Unfavorable Results

Counselors report the results of any research of professional value. Results that reflect unfavorably on institutions, programs, services, prevailing opinions, or vested interests are not withheld.

G.4.c. Reporting Errors

If counselors discover significant errors in their published research, they take reasonable steps to correct such errors in a correction erratum, or through other appropriate publication means.

G.4.d. Identity of Participants

Counselors who supply data, aid in the research of another person, report research results, or make original data available take due care to disguise the identity of respective participants in the absence of specific authorization from the participants to do otherwise. In situations where participants self-identify their involvement in research studies, researchers take active steps to ensure that data is adapted/changed to protect

the identity and welfare of all parties and that discussion of results does not cause harm to participants.

G.4.e. Replication Studies

Counselors are obligated to make available sufficient original research data to qualified professionals who may wish to replicate the study.

G.5. Publication**G.5.a. Recognizing Contributions**

When conducting and reporting research, counselors are familiar with and give recognition to previous work on the topic, observe copyright laws, and give full credit to those to whom credit is due.

G.5.b. Plagiarism

Counselors do not plagiarize, that is, they do not present another person's work as their own work.

G.5.c. Review/Replication of Data or Ideas

Counselors fully acknowledge and make editorial reviewers aware of prior publication of ideas or data where such ideas or data are submitted for review or publication.

G.5.d. Contributors

Counselors give credit through joint authorship, acknowledgment, footnote statements, or other appropriate means to those who have contributed significantly to research or concept development in accordance with such contributions. The principal contributor is listed first and minor technical or professional contributions are acknowledged in notes or introductory statements.

G.5.e. Agreement of Contributors

Counselors who conduct joint research with colleagues or students/supervisees establish agreements in advance regarding allocation of tasks, publication credit, and types of acknowledgement that will be received.

G.5.f. Student Research

For articles that are substantially based on students course papers, projects, dissertations or theses, and on which students have been the primary contributors, they are listed as principal authors.

G.5.g. Duplicate Submission

Counselors submit manuscripts for consideration to only one journal at a time. Manuscripts that are published in whole or in substantial part in another journal or published work are not submitted for publication

without acknowledgment and permission from the previous publication.

G.5.h. Professional Review

Counselors who review material submitted for publication, research, or other scholarly purposes respect the confidentiality and proprietary rights of those who submitted it. Counselors use care to make publication decisions based on valid and defensible standards. Counselors review article submissions in a timely manner and based on their scope and competency in research methodologies. Counselors who serve as reviewers at the request of editors or publishers make every effort to only review materials that are within their scope of competency and use care to avoid personal biases.

Section H

Resolving Ethical Issues

Introduction

Counselors behave in a legal, ethical, and moral manner in the conduct of their professional work. They are aware that client protection and trust in the profession depend on a high level of professional conduct. They hold other counselors to the same standards and are willing to take appropriate action to ensure that these standards are upheld.

Counselors strive to resolve ethical dilemmas with direct and open communication among all parties involved and seek consultation with colleagues and supervisors when necessary. Counselors incorporate ethical practice into their daily professional work. They engage in ongoing professional development regarding current topics in ethical and legal issues in counseling.

H.1. Standards and the Law

(See F.9.a.)

H.1.a. Knowledge

Counselors understand the *ACA Code of Ethics* and other applicable ethics codes from other professional organizations or from certification and licensure bodies of which they are members. Lack of knowledge or misunderstanding of an ethical responsibility is not a

defense against a charge of unethical conduct.

H.1.b. Conflicts Between Ethics and Laws

If ethical responsibilities conflict with law, regulations, or other governing legal authority, counselors make known their commitment to the *ACA Code of Ethics* and take steps to resolve the conflict. If the conflict cannot be resolved by such means, counselors may adhere to the requirements of law, regulations, or other governing legal authority.

H.2. Suspected Violations

H.2.a. Ethical Behavior Expected

Counselors expect colleagues to adhere to the *ACA Code of Ethics*. When counselors possess knowledge that raises doubts as to whether another counselor is acting in an ethical manner, they take appropriate action. (See *H.2.b.*, *H.2.c.*)

H.2.b. Informal Resolution

When counselors have reason to believe that another counselor is violating or has violated an ethical standard, they attempt first to resolve the issue informally with the other counselor if feasible, provided such action does not violate confidentiality rights that may be involved.

H.2.c. Reporting Ethical Violations

If an apparent violation has substantially harmed, or is likely to substantially harm a person or organization

and is not appropriate for informal resolution or is not resolved properly, counselors take further action appropriate to the situation. Such action might include referral to state or national committees on professional ethics, voluntary national certification bodies, state licensing boards, or to the appropriate institutional authorities. This standard does not apply when an intervention would violate confidentiality rights or when counselors have been retained to review the work of another counselor whose professional conduct is in question.

H.2.d. Consultation

When uncertain as to whether a particular situation or course of action may be in violation of the *ACA Code of Ethics*, counselors consult with other counselors who are knowledgeable about ethics and the *ACA Code of Ethics*, with colleagues, or with appropriate authorities

H.2.e. Organizational Conflicts

If the demands of an organization with which counselors are affiliated pose a conflict with the *ACA Code of Ethics*, counselors specify the nature of such conflicts and express to their supervisors or other responsible officials their commitment to the *ACA Code of Ethics*. When possible, counselors work toward change within the organization to allow full adherence to the *ACA Code of Ethics*. In doing so, they address any confidentiality issues.

H.2.f. Unwarranted Complaints

Counselors do not initiate, participate in, or encourage the filing of ethics complaints that are made with reckless disregard or willful ignorance of facts that would disprove the allegation.

H.2.g. Unfair Discrimination Against Complainants and Respondents

Counselors do not deny persons employment, advancement, admission to academic or other programs, tenure, or promotion based solely upon their having made or their being the subject of an ethics complaint. This does not preclude taking action based upon the outcome of such proceedings or considering other appropriate information.

H.3. Cooperation With Ethics Committees

Counselors assist in the process of enforcing the *ACA Code of Ethics*. Counselors cooperate with investigations, proceedings, and requirements of the ACA Ethics Committee or ethics committees of other duly constituted associations or boards having jurisdiction over those charged with a violation. Counselors are familiar with the *ACA Policy and Procedures for Processing Complaints of Ethical Violations* and use it as a reference for assisting in the enforcement of the *ACA Code of Ethics*.

Glossary of Terms

- Advocacy** – promotion of the well-being of individuals and groups, and the counseling profession within systems and organizations. Advocacy seeks to remove barriers and obstacles that inhibit access, growth, and development.
- Assent** – to demonstrate agreement, when a person is otherwise not capable or competent to give formal consent (e.g., informed consent) to a counseling service or plan.
- Client** – an individual seeking or referred to the professional services of a counselor for help with problem resolution or decision making.
- Counselor** – a professional (or a student who is a counselor-in-training) engaged in a counseling practice or other counseling-related services. Counselors fulfill many roles and responsibilities such as counselor educators, researchers, supervisors, practitioners, and consultants.
- Counselor Educator** – a professional counselor engaged primarily in developing, implementing, and supervising the educational preparation of counselors-in-training.
- Counselor Supervisor** – a professional counselor who engages in a formal relationship with a practicing counselor or counselor-in-training for the purpose of overseeing that individual’s counseling work or clinical skill development.
- Culture** – membership in a socially constructed way of living, which incorporates collective values, beliefs, norms, boundaries, and lifestyles that are cocreated with others who share similar worldviews comprising biological, psychosocial, historical, psychological, and other factors.
- Diversity** – the similarities and differences that occur within and across cultures, and the intersection of cultural and social identities.
- Documents** – any written, digital, audio, visual, or artistic recording of the work within the counseling relationship between counselor and client.
- Examinee** – a recipient of any professional counseling service that includes educational, psychological, and career appraisal utilizing qualitative or quantitative techniques.
- Forensic Evaluation** – any formal assessment conducted for court or other legal proceedings.
- Multicultural/Diversity Competence** – a capacity whereby counselors possess cultural and diversity awareness and knowledge about self and others, and how this awareness and knowledge is applied effectively in practice with clients and client groups.
- Multicultural/Diversity Counseling** – counseling that recognizes diversity and embraces approaches that support the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of individuals within their historical, cultural, economic, political, and psychosocial contexts.
- Student** – an individual engaged in formal educational preparation as a counselor-in-training.
- Supervisee** – a professional counselor or counselor-in-training whose counseling work or clinical skill development is being overseen in a formal supervisory relationship by a qualified trained professional.
- Supervisor** – counselors who are trained to oversee the professional clinical work of counselors and counselors-in-training.
- Teaching** – all activities engaged in as part of a formal educational program designed to lead to a graduate degree in counseling.
- Training** – the instruction and practice of skills related to the counseling profession. Training contributes to the ongoing proficiency of students and professional counselors.

