Multicultural Counseling Competency-building Assessment Activity

Activity directions: Please read the 31 competencies and rate yourself on each of the items.
1=not competent
2=beginning competency development (needs more work)
3=high competency

Select three competencies that you would like to focus on during this semester and establish goals and strategies for accomplishing greater competency in each of these three areas.

Although it is difficult to predict what types of cases and situations will emerge during the semester, we will try and focus on developing your competencies in the areas that have a (*) next to them. Note that many of the awareness and skill competencies are highlighted because we want you to build on knowledge competencies that you have obtained in other classes. Additional competencies may also be covered during the semester.

Multicultural Counseling Competencies

Counselor Awareness of Own Assumptions, Values, and Biases

Awareness Competencies:

*1. Culturally-competent counselors have moved from being culturally unaware to being aware and sensitive to their own cultural heritage and to valuing and respecting differences.

*2. Culturally-competent counselors are able to recognize the limits of their competencies and expertise.

*3. Culturally-competent counselors are aware of how their own cultural background and experiences, attitudes, and values and biases influence psychological processes.

*4. Culturally-competent counselors are comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and clients in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and beliefs.

Knowledge Competencies

5. Culturally-competent counselors have specific knowledge about their own racial and cultural heritage and how it personally and professionally affects their definitions and biases of normality-abnormality and the process of counseling.

*6. Culturally-competent counselors possess knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination, stereotyping affect them personally and in their work.

*7. Culturally-competent counselors possess knowledge about their social impact on others. They are knowledgeable about communication style differences, how their style may clash or facilitate the counseling process with minority clients, and how to anticipate the impact it may have on others.

Skill Competencies

8. Culturally-competent counselors seek out educational, consultative, and training experiences to enrich their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different populations.
*9. Culturally-competent counselors are constantly seeking to understand themselves as racial cultural beings and are actively seeking a nonracist identity.

Understanding the Worldview of Culturally Different Clients

Awareness Competencies

*10. Culturally-competent counselors are aware of their negative emotional reactions toward other racial and ethnic groups that may prove detrimental to their clients in counseling.

*11. Culturally-competent counselors are aware of their stereotypes and preconceived notions that they may hold toward other racial and ethnic groups.

Knowledge Competencies

12. Culturally-competent counselors possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group that they are working with. They are aware of life experiences, cultural heritage, and historical background of their culturally different clients. This particular competency is strongly linked to the racial/ethnic/minority development models available in the literature.

13. Culturally-competent counselors understand how race, culture, and ethnicity may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestation of psychological disorders, help seeking behavior, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of counseling approaches.

14. Culturally-competent counselors understand and have knowledge about sociopolitical influences that impinge upon the life of racial and ethnic minorities.

Skill Competencies

15. Culturally-competent counselors should familiarize themselves with relevant research and the latest findings regarding mental health and mental health disorders of various ethnic and racial groups.

16. Culturally-competent counselors become actively involved with minority individuals outside the counseling setting (via community events, social and political functions, celebrations, friendships, neighborhood groups, and so forth) so that their perspective of minorities is more than an academic or helping exercise.

Developing Appropriate Intervention Strategies and Techniques

Awareness Competencies

*17. Culturally-competent counselors respect clients’ religious and/or spiritual beliefs and values about physical and mental functioning.


*19. Culturally-competent counselors value bilingualism and do not view another language as an impediment to counseling (monolingualism may be the culprit).

Knowledge Competencies

20. Culturally-competent counselors have a clear and explicit knowledge and understanding of the generic characteristics of counseling and therapy (culture bound, class bound, and monolingual) and how they clash with the cultural values of various minority groups.
21. Culturally-competent counselors are aware of institutional barriers that prevent minorities from using mental health services.

22. Culturally-competent counselors have knowledge of the potential bias in assessment instruments and use procedures and interpret findings keeping in mind the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the clients.

23. Culturally-competent counselors have knowledge of minority family structures, hierarchies, values, and beliefs. They are knowledgeable about the community characteristics and the resources in the community as well as the family.

24. Culturally-competent counselors are aware of relevant discriminatory practices at the social and community level that may be affecting the psychological welfare of the population being served.

**Skill Competencies**

25. Culturally-competent counselors are able to engage in a variety of verbal and nonverbal helping responses. They are able to send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and appropriately. They are not tied down to only one method or approach to helping but recognize that helping styles and approaches may be culture bound.

26. Culturally-competent counselors are able to exercise institutional intervention skills on behalf of their clients.

27. Culturally-competent counselors are not adverse to seeking consultation with traditional healers or religious and spiritual leaders and practitioners in the treatment of culturally different clients when appropriate.

28. Culturally-competent counselors take responsibility for interacting in the language requested by the client; this may mean appropriate referral to outside resources.

29. Culturally-competent counselors have training and expertise in the use of traditional assessment and testing instruments. They not only understand the technical aspects of the instruments but are also aware of the cultural limitations. This allows them to use test instruments for the welfare of clients from diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic groups.

30. Culturally-competent counselors should attend to as well as work to eliminate biases, prejudices, and discriminatory practices. They should be cognizant of sociopolitical contexts in conducting evaluations and providing interventions, and should develop sensitivity to issues of oppression, sexism, and racism.

31. Culturally-competent counselors take responsibility in educating their clients to the processes of psychological intervention such as goals, expectations, legal rights, and the counselor’s orientation.