

## Consultation

Making use of consultation as a regular component of clinical activities, rather than as a resource used only on atypical occasions, is one way to extend the learning process as a focus of exploration and discovery.

- Consultation with a variety of colleagues on a frequent basis can strengthen the sense of community in which counselors work.
- It can provide a safety net, helping counselors to ensure that their work does not fall into needless errors, unintentional malpractice, or harmful actions that are due to lack of knowledge, guidance, perspective, challenge, or support.
- It can create a sense of cooperative venture in which the process of professional development, exploration, and discovery continue.
- Consultation with colleagues reflects a counselor's competence
- Consultation is an element of remaining in "standard of care" – what other mental health professionals would reasonable do.

One red flag to the possibility that a course of action is inappropriate is the counselor's reluctance to disclose it to others.

- Is there a compelling reason for **not** discussing the contemplated action with a colleague, consultant, or supervisor?

One question a counselor may ask about any proposed action is this:

- If I took this action, would I have any reluctance for all of my professional colleagues to know that I had taken it?

If discussion with a colleague has not helped to clarify the issues, consultation with additional professionals, each of whom may provide different perspectives and suggestions, may be needed.