

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING
COMPETENCIES COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS
(AMCD.org)

I. Counselor Awareness of Own Cultural Values and Biases

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

1. Culturally skilled counselors believe that cultural self-awareness and sensitivity to one's own cultural heritage is essential.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can identify the culture(s) to which they belong and the significance of that membership including the relationship of individuals in that group with individuals from other groups, institutionally, historically, educationally, etc. (include A, B, and C Dimensions as do the other suggestions in this section).
- b. Can identify the specific cultural group(s) from which counselor derives fundamental cultural heritage and the significant beliefs and attitudes held by those cultures that are assimilated into their own attitudes and beliefs.
- c. Can recognize the impact of those beliefs on their ability to respect others different from themselves.
- d. Can identify specific attitudes, beliefs and values from their own heritage and cultural learning, which support behaviors that demonstrate respect, and valuing of differences and those that impede or hinder respect and valuing of differences.

2. Culturally skilled counselors are aware of how their own cultural background and experiences have influenced attitudes, values, and biases about psychological processes.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can identify the history of their culture in relation to educational opportunities and its impact on their current worldview (includes A and some B Dimensions).
- b. Can identify at least five personal, relevant cultural traits and can explain how each has influenced cultural values of the counselor.
- c. Can identify social and cultural influences on their cognitive development and current information processing styles and can contrast that with those of others (includes A, B, and C Dimensions).
- d. Can identify specific social and cultural factors and events in their history that influence their view and use of social belonging, interpretations of behavior, motivation, problem solving and decision methods, thoughts and behaviors (including subconscious) in relation to authority and other institutions and can contrast these with the perspectives of others. (A and B Dimensions)
- e. Can articulate the beliefs of their own cultural and religious groups around differences, such as sexual orientation, and the impact of these beliefs in a counseling relationship.

3. Culturally skilled counselors are able to recognize the limits of their multicultural competency and expertise.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can recognize in a counseling or teaching relationship, when and how their attitudes, beliefs and values are interfering with providing the best service to clients. (Primarily A and B Dimensions).

b. Can give real examples of cultural situations in which they recognize their limitations and referred the client to more appropriate resources.

4. Culturally skilled counselors recognize their sources of discomfort with differences that exist between themselves and clients in terms of race, ethnicity and culture.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Able to recognize their sources of comfort/discomfort with respect to differences in terms of race, ethnicity and culture.
b. Can identify at least five specific cultural differences, the needs of culturally different clients, and how these differences are handled in the counseling relationship.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS (AMCD.org) (continued)

I. Counselor Awareness of Own Cultural Values and Biases

KNOWLEDGE

1. Culturally skilled 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.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Have knowledge regarding their heritage: for example, A Dimensions in terms of ethnicity, language, and so forth, and C Dimensions in terms of knowledge regarding the context of the time period in which their ancestors entered the established United States and/or North American continent.
b. Can recognize and discuss their family and culture's perspectives of acceptable (normal) codes of conduct and what are unacceptable (abnormal) and how this may or may not vary from those of other cultures and families.
c. Can identify at least five specific features of culture-of-origin and explain how those features impact the relationship with culturally different clients.

2. Culturally skilled counselors possess knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affect them personally and in their work. This allows individuals to acknowledge their own racist attitudes, beliefs, and feelings. Although this standard applies to all groups, for White counselors it may mean that they understand how they may have directly or indirectly benefited from individual, institutional, and cultural racism as outlined in White identity development models.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can specifically identify, name, and discuss privileges that they personally receive in society due to their race, socioeconomic background, gender, physical abilities, sexual orientation, and so forth.
b. Specifically referring to White counselors, can discuss White identity development models and how they relate to one's personal experiences.
c. Can provide a reasonably specific definition of racism, prejudice, discrimination and stereotype. Can describe a situation in which they have been judged on something other

than merit. Can describe a situation in which they have judged someone on something other than merit.

3. Culturally skilled counselors possess knowledge about their social impact upon others. They are knowledgeable about communication style differences, how their style may clash with or foster the counseling process with persons of color or others different from themselves based on the A, B and C Dimensions, and how to anticipate the impact it may have on others.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can describe the A and B Dimensions of Personal Identity with which they most strongly identify.
- b. Can behaviorally define their communication style and describe both their verbal and nonverbal behaviors, interpretations of others behaviors, and expectations.
- c. Recognize the cultural bases (A Dimension) of their communication style and the differences between their style and the styles of those people different from themselves.
- d. Can describe the behavioral impact and reaction of their communication style on clients different from themselves.
- e. Can give examples of an incident where communication broke down with a client of color and hypothesize about the causes.
- f. Can give 3-5 concrete examples of situations in which they modified their communication style to compliment that of a culturally different client, how they decided on the modification, and the result of that modification.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS (AMCD.org) (continued)

I. Counselor Awareness of Own Cultural Values and Biases

SKILLS

1. Culturally skilled counselors seek out educational, consultative, and training experiences to improve their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different populations. Being able to recognize the limits of their competencies, they (a) seek consultation, (b) seek further training or education, (c) refer out to more qualified individuals or resources, or (d) engage in a combination of these.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Maintain an active referral list and continuously seek new referrals relevant to different needs of clients along A and B Dimensions.
- b. Understand and communicate to the client that the referral is being made because of the counselor's limitations rather than communicating that it is caused by the client.
- c. Actively consult regularly with other professionals regarding issues of culture in order to receive feedback about issues and situations and whether or where referral may be necessary.

2. Culturally skilled counselors are constantly seeking to understand themselves as racial and cultural beings and are actively seeking a nonracist identity.

Explanatory Statements

- a. When receiving feedback the counselor demonstrates a receptivity and willingness to learn.

Strategies to Achieve these above Competencies and Objectives (I)

Read materials regarding identity development. For example: a European American counselor may read materials on White or Majority Identity Development, an African American may read materials on Black Identity Development, etc. to gain an understanding of own development. Additionally, reading about others' identity development processes is essential.

Film: "The Color of Fear" by Lee Mun Wah

Film: A Class Divided by PBS

Film: TrueColors---20/20 Special

Video: The Triad Model by Paul Pederson

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS (AMCD.org) (continued)

II. Counselor Awareness of Client's Worldview

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

1. Culturally skilled counselors are aware of their negative and positive emotional reactions toward other racial and ethnic groups that may prove detrimental to the counseling relationship. They are willing to contrast their own beliefs and attitudes with those of their culturally different clients in a nonjudgmental fashion.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Identify their common emotional reactions about individuals and groups different from themselves and observe their own reactions in encounters. For example, do they feel fear when approaching a group of three young African American males? Do they assume

that the Asian American clients for whom they provide career counseling will be interested in a technical career?

b. Can articulate how their personal reactions and assumptions are different from those who identify with that group (e.g., if the reaction upon approaching three young African American males is fear, what is the reaction of a young African American male or female in the same situation? What might the reaction be of an African American female approaching a group of White young men?).

c. Can describe at least two distinct examples of cultural conflict between self and culturally different clients, including how these conflicts were used as "content" for counseling. For example, if a Chicana agrees to live at home rather than board at a four year college in order to support her mother. Can a counselor be non-judgmental?

2. Culturally skilled counselors are aware of their stereotypes and preconceived notions that they may hold toward other racial and ethnic minority groups.

Explanatory Statements

a. Recognize their stereotyped reactions to people different than themselves. (e.g., silently articulating their awareness of a negative stereotypical reaction..."I noticed that I locked my car doors when that African American teenager walked by.").

b. Can give specific examples of how their stereotypes (including "positive" ones), referring to the A and B Dimensions can impact the counselor-client relationship.

c. Recognize assumptions of those in a similar cultural group but who may differ based on A or B Dimension.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS (AMCD.org) (continued)

II. Counselor Awareness of Client's Worldview

KNOWLEDGE

1. Culturally skilled counselors possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group with which they are working. They are aware of the life experiences, cultural heritage, and historical background of their culturally different clients. This particular competency is strongly linked to the "minority identity development models" available in the literature.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can articulate (objectively) differences in nonverbal and verbal behavior of the five major different cultural groups most frequently seen in their experience of counseling.
 - b. Can describe at least two different models of "minority identity development" and their implications for counseling with persons of color or others who experience oppression or marginalization.
 - c. Can identify within-group differences and assess various aspects of individual clients to determine individual differences as well as cultural differences.
 - d. Can discuss viewpoints of other cultural groups regarding issues such as sexual orientation, physical ability / disability, gender, and aging.
2. Culturally skilled counselors understand how race, culture, ethnicity, and so forth may affect personality formation, vocational choices, and manifestation of psychological disorders, help seeking behavior, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of counseling approaches.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can distinguish cultural differences and expectations regarding role and responsibility in family, participation of family in career decision making, appropriate family members to be involved when seeking help, culturally acceptable means of expressing emotion and anxiety, and so forth. (Primarily along A Dimension and portions of B Dimension).
 - b. Based on literature about A Dimensions, can describe and give examples of how a counseling approach may or may not be appropriate for a specific group of people based primarily upon an A Dimension.
 - c. Understand and can explain the historical point of contact with dominant society for various ethnic groups and the impact of the type of contact (enslaved, refugee, seeking economic opportunities, conquest, etc.) on potential relationships and trust when seeking help from dominant culture institutions.
 - d. Can describe one system of personality development, the populations(s) on which the theory was developed, and how this system relates or does not relate to at least two culturally different populations.
 - e. Can identify the role of gender, socioeconomic status, and physical disability as they interact with personality formation across cultural groups.
3. Culturally skilled counselors understand and have knowledge about sociopolitical influences that impinge upon the life of racial and ethnic minorities. Immigration issues, poverty, racism, stereotyping, and powerlessness may impact self-esteem and self-concept in the counseling process.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can identify implications of concepts such as internalized oppression, institutional racism, privilege, and the historical and current political climate regarding immigration, poverty, and welfare (public assistance).
- b. Understand the economic benefits and contributions gained by the work of various groups, including migrant farm workers, to the daily life of the counselor and the country at large.
- c. Can communicate an understanding of the unique position, constraints and needs of those clients who experience oppression based on an A or B dimension alone (and families of clients) who share this history.

- d. Can identify current issues that impact groups of people (A and B Dimensions) in legislation, social climate, and so forth, and how that affects individuals and families to whom the counselor may be providing services.
- e. Are aware of legal legislation issues and legal rights that impact various communities and populations
- f. Counselors are aware of how documents such as the book, The Bell Curve, and affirmative action legislation impact society's perception of different cultural groups.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS (AMCD.org) (continued)

II. Counselor Awareness of Client's Worldview

SKILLS

1. Culturally skilled counselors should familiarize themselves with relevant research and the latest findings regarding mental health and mental disorders that affect various ethnic and racial groups. They should actively seek out educational experiences that enrich their knowledge, understanding, and cross-cultural skills for more effective counseling behavior.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can identify at least five multicultural experiences in which counselor has participated within past 3 years.
- b. Can identify professional growth activities and information, which is presented by professionals respected and seen as credible by members of the communities being studied.

2. Culturally skilled counselors become actively involved with minority individuals outside the counseling setting (e.g., 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.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Actively plan experiences and activities that will contradict negative stereotypes and preconceived notions they may hold.

Strategies to Achieve the Competencies and Objectives (II)

The following reading list may be helpful for counselors to broaden their understanding of different worldviews (some of these materials would also be helpful in developing culturally appropriate intervention strategies)

- Spend time in communities different from your own, (e.g., shopping in grocery stores, attending churches, walking in marches).
- Read newspapers and other periodicals targeting specific population different from your own, (i.e., Spanish language newspapers, "Buffalo Soldier", "Lakota Times").
- Engage in activities and celebrations within communities different from own (e.g., Juneteenth, Tet, Cinco de Mayo).
- Engage a mentor or two from cultures different from own who are also working toward cross-cultural competency (be sure to discuss with them your contribution to the relationship).

- Accept that it is your responsibility to learn about other cultures and implications in counseling and do not expect or rely on individuals from those cultures to teach you.
- Learn a second or third language relevant to clients to begin to understand the significance of that language in the transmission of culture.
- Seek out and engage in consultation from professionals from cultures relevant to your client population.
- Spend time in civil service offices observing service orientation toward individuals of color (Chicano/Latino; African American; Asian American; Native American) and contrast that with service orientation toward white individuals. Also observe any differences on service orientation that may be based on class issues (e.g., someone alone and well dressed versus a woman with children wearing older clothing, somewhat disheveled).

Film: "The Color of Fear" by Lee Mun Wah" / Film: "El Norte"

Film: "Stand and Deliver" / Film: "Roots"

Film: "Lakota Woman" / Film: "Daughters of the Dust"

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS (AMCD.org) (continued)

III. Culturally Appropriate Intervention Strategies

BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

1. Culturally skilled counselors respect clients' religious and/ or spiritual beliefs and values, including attributions and taboos, because they affect worldview, psychosocial functioning, and expressions of distress.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can identify the positive aspects of spirituality (in general) in terms of wellness and healing aspects.
- b. Can identify in a variety of religious and spiritual communities the recognized form of leadership and guidance and their client's relationship (if existent) with that organization and entity.

2. Culturally skilled counselors respect indigenous helping practices and respect help-giving networks among communities of color.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can describe concrete examples of how they may integrate and cooperate with indigenous helpers when appropriate.

3. Culturally skilled counselors value bilingualism and do not view another language as an impediment to counseling (monolingualism may be the culprit).

Explanatory Statements

- a. Communicate to clients and colleagues values and assets of bilingualism (if client is bilingual).

III. Culturally Appropriate Intervention Strategies

KNOWLEDGE

1. Culturally skilled 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 may clash with the cultural values of various cultural groups.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can identify, within various theories, the cultural values, beliefs and assumptions made about individuals and contrast these with values, beliefs, and assumptions of different racial and cultural groups.
- b. Can identify and describe primary indigenous helping practices in terms of positive and effective role in at least five A or B Dimensions, relevant to counselor's client population.

2. Culturally skilled counselors are aware of institutional barriers that prevent minorities from using mental health services.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Can describe concrete examples of institutional barriers within their organization that prevent minorities from using mental health services and share those examples with colleagues and decision-making bodies within the institution.
- b. Can identify and communicate possible alternatives that would reduce or eliminate existing barriers within their institution and within local, state, and national decision making bodies.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS (AMCD.org) (continued)

III. Culturally Appropriate Intervention Strategies KNOWLEDGE (continued)

3. Culturally skilled 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.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Demonstrate ability to interpret assessment results including implications of dominant cultural values affecting assessment/interpretation, interaction of cultures for those who are bicultural, and impact of historical institutional oppression.
- b. Can discuss information regarding cultural, racial, gender profile of normative group used for validity and reliability on any assessment used by counselor.
- c. Use assessment instruments appropriately with clients having limited English skills.

- Culturally skilled counselors have knowledge of family structures, hierarchies, values, and beliefs from various cultural perspectives. They are knowledgeable about the community where a particular cultural group may reside and the resources in the community.

Explanatory Statements

- Are aware of legal issues that impact various communities and populations.

III. Culturally Appropriate Intervention Strategies

SKILLS

- Culturally skilled 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. When they sense that their helping style is limited and potentially inappropriate, they can anticipate and modify it.

Explanatory Statements

- Can articulate what, when, why and how they apply different verbal and nonverbal helping responses based on A and B Dimensions.
 - Can identify and describe techniques in which they have expertise for providing service that may require minimal English language skills (e.g., expressive therapy).
 - Can discuss with the client aspects of their religious/spiritual beliefs that have been helpful to the client in the past.
- Culturally skilled counselors are able to exercise institutional intervention skills on behalf of their clients. They can help clients determine whether a "problem" stems from racism or bias in others (the concept of healthy paranoia) so that clients do not inappropriately personalize problems.

Explanatory Statements

- Can recognize and discuss examples in which racism or bias may actually be imbedded in an institutional system or society.
 - Communicate to clients an understanding of the necessary coping skills and behaviors viewed by dominant society as dysfunctional that they may need to keep intact.
 - Can describe concrete examples of situations in which it is appropriate and possibly necessary for a counselor to exercise institutional intervention skills on behalf of a client.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS (AMCD.org) (continued)

III. Culturally Appropriate Intervention Strategies

SKILLS (continued)

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

Explanatory Statements

- a. Participate or gather adequate information regarding indigenous or community helping resources to make appropriate referrals (e. g., be familiar with the American Indian community enough to recognize when, how and to whom it may be appropriate to refer a client to indigenous healers).
4. Culturally skilled counselors take responsibility for interacting in the language requested by the client and, if not feasible, make appropriate referrals. A serious problem arises when the linguistic skills of the counselor do not match the language of the client. This being the case, counselors should (a) seek a translator with cultural knowledge and appropriate professional background or (b) refer to a knowledgeable and competent bilingual counselor.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Are familiar with resources that provide services in languages appropriate to clients.
 - b. Will seek out, whenever necessary, services or translators to ensure that language needs are met.
 - c. If working within an organization, actively advocate for the hiring of bilingual counselors relevant to client population.
5. Culturally skilled 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 also are aware of the cultural limitations. This allows them to use test instruments for the welfare of culturally different clients.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Demonstrate ability to interpret assessment results including implications of dominant cultural values affecting assessment/interpretation, interaction of cultures for those who are bicultural, and the impact of historical institutional oppression.
 - b. Understand that although an assessment instrument may be translated into another language, the translation may be literal without an accurate contextual translation including culturally relevant connotations and idioms.
6. Culturally skilled counselors should attend to as well as work to eliminate biases, prejudices, and discriminatory contexts in conducting evaluations and providing interventions, and should develop sensitivity to issues of oppression, sexism, heterosexism, elitism and racism.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Recognize incidents in which clients, students and others are being treated unfairly based on race, ethnicity, and physical disability, and take action by directly addressing the incident or perpetrator, filing informal complaint, filing formal complaint, and so forth.
7. Culturally skilled counselors take responsibility for educating their clients to the processes of psychological intervention, such as goals, expectations, legal rights, and the orientation.

Explanatory Statements

- a. Assess the client's understanding and familiarity with counseling and mental health services and provides accurate information regarding the process, limitations, and function of the services into which the client is entering.
 - b. Ensure that the client understands client rights, issues and definitions of confidentiality, and expectations placed upon that client. In this educational process, counselors adapt information to ensure that all concepts are clearly understood by client. This may include defining and discussing these concepts.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS (AMCD.org) (continued)

Strategies to Achieve the Competencies and Objectives (III)

The following reading list may be helpful for building a foundation to develop and apply culturally appropriate interventions: (*older books but still relevant*)

--Atkinson, D., Morten, G., & Sue, D. W. (1989). *Counseling American minorities: A cross-cultural perspective*. Dubuque, IA: Brown.

--Ibrahim, F. A., & Arredondo, P. M. (1990). Ethical issues in multicultural counseling. In B. Herlihy & L. Golden (Eds.), *Ethical standards casebook* (pp. 137-145). Alexandria, VA: American Association for Counseling and Development.

--Katz, J. (1978). *White awareness: Handbook for anti-racism training*. Norman, Oklahoma: Oklahoma.

--LaFromboise, T. D., & Foster, S. L. (1990). Cross-cultural training: Scientist-practitioner model and methods. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 20, 472-489. -

---LaFromboise, T. D., & Foster, S. L. (1989). Ethics in multicultural counseling. In P. B. Pedersen, W. J. Lonner, & J. E. Trimble (Eds.), *Counseling across cultures* (3rd ed., pp. 115-136). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.

Meet with leaders and heads of organizations that specifically focus on providing service to individuals of certain cultural groups to discuss how you may work cooperatively together and what support you may provide the organization.

Conduct informal research of your clientele, your organizations' clientele, to determine if there are patterns of use or non use along cultural and/or racial lines.

OVERALL STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING COMPETENCIES AND OBJECTIVES IN ALL THREE AREAS:

- Learn a second or third language relevant to clients.
- Communicate to conference organizers and workshop providers that you will attend only if the activity addresses cross cultural aspects of the topic.
- Actively communicate in your organization the need for training in cross-cultural training relevant to that organization.
- Speak up in your organization when you observe that clients, students etc. are being treated unfairly based on race, ethnicity, physical ableness, etc.
- Become a member of AMCD.org, or state and local organizations that provide cross-cultural exchanges.