



STANDARDS

for the Practice of

Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Adopted 1979
Revised 1992, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2011

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I. Introduction

Since its formation as a professional organization in 1976, AMHCA has been committed to establishing and promoting vigorous standards for education and training, professional practice, and professional ethics for Clinical Mental Health Counselors. Initially, AMHCA sought to define and promote the professional identity of mental health counselors. Today, with licensure laws in all 50 states, AMHCA seeks to enhance the practice of clinical mental health counseling and to promote standards for clinical education and clinical practice that anticipate the future roles of Clinical Mental Health Counselors within the broader health care system. As a professional association, AMHCA affiliated with APGA (a precursor to the American Counseling Association [ACA]) as a division in 1978; in 1998, AMHCA became a separate not-for-profit organization, but retained its status as a division of ACA.

In 1976, a group of community mental health, community agency and private practice counselors founded AMHCA as the professional association for the newly emerging group of counselors who identified their practice as “mental health counseling.” Without credentialing, licensure, education and training standards, or other marks of a clinical profession, these early mental health counselors worked alongside social workers and psychologists in the developing community mental health service system as “paraprofessionals” or “allied health professionals” despite the fact that they held Master’s or Doctoral degrees. By 1979, the early founders of AMHCA had organized four key mechanisms for defining the new clinical professional specialty:

- 1) identifying a definition of mental health counseling;
- 2) setting standards for education and training, clinical practice, and professional ethics;
- 3) creating a national credentialing system; and
- 4) starting a professional journal, which included research and clinical practice content. These mechanisms have significantly contributed to the professional development of clinical mental health counseling and merit further explication.

Scope of Practice

A crucial development in mental health counseling has been defining the roles and functions of the profession. The initial issue of AMHCA's new *Journal of Mental Health Counseling* included the first published definition of mental health counseling as "an interdisciplinary, multifaceted, holistic process of: 1) the promotion of healthy lifestyles; 2) identification of individual stressors and personal levels of functioning; and 3) the preservation or restoration of mental health" (Seiler & Messina, 1979). In 1986, the AMHCA Board of Directors adopted a more formal, comprehensive definition: "clinical mental health counseling is the provision of professional counseling services involving the application of principles of psychotherapy, human development, learning theory, group dynamics, and the etiology of mental illness and dysfunctional behavior to individuals, couples, families and groups, for the purpose of promoting optimal mental health, dealing with normal problems of living and treating psychopathology. The practice of clinical mental health counseling includes, but is not limited to, diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders, psycho-educational techniques aimed at the prevention of mental and emotional disorders, consultations to individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities, and clinical research into more effective psychotherapeutic treatment modalities."

Clinical Mental Health Counselors have always understood that their professional work encompasses a broad range of clinical practice, including dealing with normal problems of living and promoting optimal mental health in addition to the prevention, intervention and treatment of mental and emotional disorders. This work of Clinical Mental Health Counselors serves the needs of socially and culturally diverse clients (e.g. age, gender, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation) across the lifespan (i.e. children, adolescents and adults including older adults and geriatric populations). Clinical Mental Health Counselors have developed a strong sense of professional identity over the last 35 years. AMHCA has sought to support this sense of professional identity through legislative and professional advocacy, professional standards, a code of ethics, continuing education, and clinical educational resources.

Standards of Practice and Research

A key development for the profession was AMHCA's creation of education and training standards for mental health counselors in 1979. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) adopted and adapted these AMHCA training standards in 1988 when it established the first set of accreditation standards for Masters programs in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. In keeping with AMHCA standards, CACREP accreditation standards for the Mental Health Counseling specialty have consistently required 60 semester hours of graduate coursework. AMHCA remained an active advocate for vigorous clinical training standards through the 2009 CACREP accreditation standards revision process, during which community counseling accreditation standards were merged into the new clinical mental health counseling standards. After careful review, AMHCA endorsed the clinical mental health counseling standards.

Another important step in the further professionalization of clinical mental health counseling, AMHCA established the National Academy of Certified Mental Health Counselors, the first credentialing body for Clinical Mental Health Counselors, and gave its first certification examination in 1979. In 1993, this Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor credential was absorbed into the National Board for Certified Counselors credentialing process where it remains. AMHCA clinical standards have always recognized and incorporated the CCMHC credential as an important means of recognizing that a Clinical Mental Health Counselor has met independent clinical practice standards, despite significant differences which exist among state counselor licensure laws, as well as among educational and training programs.

Finally, since 1979, AMHCA published the *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, which has become widely recognized and cited as an important contributor to the research and professional literature on clinical mental health counseling.

Taken together, these four mechanisms (definition of scope of practice; educational and training standards, professional practice standards and code of ethics; credentialing; and professional journal) resulted in the recognition of clinical mental health counseling as an important profession to be included in our

health care system. In recognition of the central importance of vigorous professional educational and clinical practice standards, AMHCA has periodically revised its professional standards in 1993-1994, 2003, and 2010-11 to reflect evolving practice requirements. These professional standards as well as the 2010 Code of Ethics constitute the basis from which AMHCA continues to advocate for, and seek to advance, the practice of clinical mental health counseling.

II. Educational and Pre-Degree Clinical Training Standards

Required Education: Master's degree: Clinical Mental Health Counseling (60 semester hours)

1. Program: CACREP-accredited Clinical Mental Health Counseling program – based on 2009 standards (*endorsed by AMHCA Board*) or Master's degree in Counseling (minimum of 48 semester hours) from a regionally accredited institution. The 48 semester-hour minimum will increase to 60 semester hours in January 2016.
2. Curriculum: Consistent with 2009 CACREP standards, clinical mental health counseling programs should include the core CACREP areas and specialized training in clinical mental health counseling. The core CACREP areas include: 1) Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice; 2) Social and Cultural Diversity; 3) Human Growth and Development across the lifespan; 4) Career Development; 5) Helping Relationships; 6) Group Work; 7) Assessment; 8) Research and Program Evaluation.
3. Specialized Clinical Mental Health Counseling Training: 1) Ethical, Legal and Practice Foundations of Clinical Mental Health Counseling; 2) Prevention and Clinical Intervention; 3) Clinical Assessment; 4) Diagnosis and Treatment of Mental Disorders; 5) Diversity and Advocacy in Clinical Mental Health Counseling; and 6) Clinical Mental Health Counseling Research and Outcome Evaluation. These areas of Clinical Mental Health Counselor preparation address the clinical mental health needs across the lifespan (children, adolescents, adults and older adults) and across socially and culturally diverse populations.

The current AMHCA standards also recommend additional standards related to faculty, supervision and the following: 1) Biological Bases of Behavior (including psychopathology and psychopharmacology); 2) Trauma;

and 3) Co-Occurring Disorders (mental disorders and substance abuse), which will be outlined below. This training may be completed as part of the degree program, in post-Masters coursework, or as part of a certificate or continuing education or CCMHC Credential.

4. Pre-Degree Clinical Mental Health Counseling Field Work Guidelines
 - a. Students' pre-degree clinical experiences meet the minimum training standards of 100 Practicum and 600 Internship hours.
 - b. Students receive an hour of clinical supervision by an independently and approved licensed supervisor for every 20 hours of client direct care. This field work supervision is addition to the practicum and internship requirements for their academic program.
 - c. Students are individually supervised by a supervisor with no more than 6 (FTE) or 12 total supervisees.

III. Faculty and Supervisor Standards

Faculty Standards

Faculty with primary responsibility for Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs should have an earned doctorate in a field related to clinical mental health counseling and identify with the field of CMHC. While AMHCA recognizes that clinical mental health counseling programs have the need for diverse non-primary faculty who may not meet all of the following criteria; the following knowledge and skills are required for faculty with primary responsibility for Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs.

Knowledge

1. Demonstrate expertise in the content areas in which they teach and have a thorough understanding of client populations served.
2. Involved in clinical supervision either as instructors or in the field have a working knowledge of current supervision models and apply them to the supervisory process.
3. Understand that Clinical Mental Health Counselors are asked to provide a range of services including counseling clients about problems of living,

promoting optimal mental health, and treatment of mental and emotional disorders across the lifespan.

4. Demonstrate training in the following:
 - Evidence-Based Practices
 - Differential Diagnosis and Treatment Planning
 - Co-Occurring Disorders and Trauma
 - Biological Bases of Behavior including Psychopharmacology
 - Social and Cultural Foundations of Behavior
 - Individual Family and Group Counseling
 - Clinical Assessment and Testing
 - Professional Orientation and CMHC Ethics
 - Advocacy and Leadership
 - Consultation and Supervision
5. Possess knowledge about professional boundaries as well as professional behavior in all interactions with students and colleagues.

Skills

1. Demonstrate clinical mental health skills by completing licensure requirements including successful completion of coursework, fieldwork requirements, licensure exams, and licensure renewal requirements.
2. Demonstrate identification with the field of clinical mental health counseling by their academic credentials, scholarship and professional affiliations including their participation in organizations which promote clinical mental health counseling including AMHCA, ACA and ACES. Faculty who provide clinical supervision in the program or on site are able to lead supervision seminars which promote case discussion, small group process and critical thinking.
3. Complete the equivalent of 15 semester hours of coursework at the doctoral level in the clinical mental health specialty area or a comparable amount of scholarship in this area.
4. Possess expertise in working with diverse client populations in areas they teach including clients across the spectrum of social class, ethnic/racial groups, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities.
5. Demonstrate and model the ability to develop and maintain clear role boundaries within the teaching relationship.

6. Demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate skills and performance of students.

Supervisor Standards

AMHCA recommends at least 24 continuing education hours or equivalent graduate credit hours of training in the theory and practice of clinical supervision for those Clinical Mental Health Counselors who provide pre-degree or post degree clinical supervision to CMHC students or trainees. AMHCA recommends that Clinical Supervisors obtain, on the average, at least 3 continuing education hours in supervision per year as part of their overall program of continuing education. Clinical supervisors should meet the following knowledge and skills criteria.

Knowledge:

1. Possess a strong working knowledge of evidence based clinical theory and interventions and application to the clinical process.
2. Understand the client population and the practice setting of the supervisee.
3. Understand and have a working knowledge of current supervision models and their application to the supervisory process. Maintain a working knowledge of the most current methods and techniques in Clinical Supervision Knowledge of Group Supervision methodology including the appropriate use and limits.
4. Identify and understand the roles, functions and responsibilities of Clinical Supervisors including liability in the supervisory process. Communicates expectations and nature and extent of the supervision relationship.
5. Maintain a working knowledge of appropriate professional development activities for supervisees. These activities should be focused on empirically based scientific knowledge.
6. Show a strong understanding of the supervisory relationship and related issues.
7. Identifies and define the cultural issues that arise in Clinical Supervision and be able to incorporate the cultural aspect into the supervisory process.

8. Understand and define the legal and ethical issues in Clinical Supervision including
 - a. Applicable laws, licensure rules and the Code of Ethics specifically as they relate to supervision.
 - b. Supervisory liability and fiduciary responsibility.
 - c. Risk management models and processes as they relate to the clinical process and to supervision.
9. Possess a working understanding of the Evaluation process in clinical supervision including evaluating supervisee competence and remediation of supervisee skill development. This includes initial, formative and summative assessment of supervisee knowledge, skills and self-awareness. Supervision includes both formal and informal feedback mechanisms.
10. Maintain a working knowledge of industry recognized financial management processes and required recordkeeping practices including electronic records and transmission of records

Skills:

1. Possess a thorough understanding and experience in working with the supervisees' client populations. Be able to demonstrate and explain the counselor role and appropriate clinical interventions within the cultural and clinical context.
2. Develop, maintain and explain the Supervision Contract to manage supervisee relationships with clear expectations. Including
 - a. Frequency, location, length and duration of supervision meetings
 - b. Supervision models and expectations
 - c. Liability and fiduciary responsibility of the supervisor
 - d. The evaluation process, instruments used and frequency of evaluation
 - e. Emergency and critical incident procedures
3. Demonstrate and model the ability to develop and maintain clear role boundaries and an appropriate balance between consultation and training within the supervisory relationship.
4. Demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate skills and performance of supervisees including the ability to confront and correct unsuitable

- actions and interventions on the part of the supervisees. Provides timely substantive and formative feedback to supervisees.
5. Present strong problem-solving and dilemma resolution skills and practice skills with supervisees.
6. Develop risk management strategies and demonstrates the ability to implement strategies.
7. Practice and model self-assessment. Seek consultation as needed.
8. Conceptualize cultural differences in therapy and in supervision. Incorporates this understanding into the supervisory process
9. Possess an understanding of group supervision techniques and the role of group supervision in the supervision process.
10. Comply with applicable federal and local law. Able to take responsibility for supervisees' actions, which include an understanding of recordkeeping and financial management rules and practice.

IV. Clinical Practice Standards

Post-Degree/Pre-Licensure

Clinical Mental Health Counselors have a minimum of 3,000 hours of supervised clinical practice post degree over a period of at least 2 years.

Post-Licensure

In the process of acquiring the first 3,000 hours of client contact in postgraduate clinical experience, AMHCA recommends a ratio of 1 hour of supervision for every 20 hours of on-site work hours with a combination of individual, triadic and group supervision.

Peer Review and Supervision

Clinical Mental Health Counselors maintain a program of peer review, supervision and consultation even after they are independently licensed. It is expected that Clinical Mental Health Counselors seek additional supervision or consultation to respond to the needs of individual clients, as difficulties beyond

their range of expertise arise. While need is to be determined individually, independently licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselors must ensure an optimal level of consultation and supervision to meet client needs.

Continuing Education

Clinical Mental Health Counselors at the post-degree and independently licensed level must comply with state regulations, certification and credentialing requirements to obtain and maintain continuing educational requirements related to the practice of clinical mental health counseling. Clinical Mental Health Counselors maintain a repertoire of specialized counseling skills and participate in continuing education to enhance their knowledge of the practice of clinical mental health counseling.

In accordance with state law, AMHCA recommends that in order to acquire, maintain and enhance skills, counselors actively participate in a formal professional development and continuing education program. This formal professional development ordinarily addresses peer review and consultation; continuum of care; best practices and effectiveness research; advocacy; counselor issues and impairment; and AMHCA Code of Ethics. Clinical Mental Health Counselors who are involved in independent clinical practice also receive ongoing training relating to independent practice, accessibility, accurate representation, office procedures, service environment, and reimbursement for services.

Legal and Ethical Issues

Clinical Mental Health Counselors who deliver clinical services comply with state statutes and regulations governing the practice of clinical mental health counseling. Clinical Mental Health Counselors adhere to all state laws governing the practice of clinical mental health counseling. In addition, they adhere to all administrative rules, ethical standards, and other requirements of state clinical mental health counseling or other regulatory boards. Counselors obtain competent legal advice concerning compliance with all relevant statutes and regulations. Where State Law is lacking governing the practice of counseling, counselors strictly adhere to the national and ethical standards for the clinical practice of mental health counseling and obtain competent legal advice concerning compliance with these standards.

Clinical Mental Health Counselors who deliver clinical services comply with the codes of ethics specific to the practice of clinical mental health counseling. The AMHCA ethical standards (2010) outline behavior which must be adhered to regarding Commitment to Clients; Counseling Process; Responsibility and Integrity; Assessment and Diagnosis; Record Keeping, Fee Arrangements and Bartering; Consultant and Advocate Roles; Commitment to Other Professionals; and Students, Supervisee and Employee Responsibilities.

Clinical Mental Health Counselors are first responsible to society, second to consumers, third to the profession, and last to themselves. Clinical Mental Health Counselors identify themselves as members of the counseling profession. They adhere to the codes of ethics mandated by state boards regulating counseling and by the clinical organizations in which they hold membership and certification. They also adhere to ethical standards endorsed by state boards regulating counseling, and cooperate fully with the adjudication procedures of ethics committees, peer review teams, and state boards. All Clinical Mental Health Counselors willingly participate in a formal review of their clinical work, as needed. They provide clients appropriate information on filing complaints alleging unethical behavior and respond in a timely manner to client request to review records.

Of particular concern to AMHCA is that Clinical Mental Health Counselors who deliver clinical services respond in a professional manner to all who seek their services. Clinical Mental Health Counselors provide services to each client requesting services regardless of lifestyle, origin, race, color, age, handicap, sex, religion, or sexual orientation. They are knowledgeable and sensitive to cultural diversity and the multicultural issues of clients. Counselors have a duty to acquire the knowledge, skills, and resources to assist diverse clients. If after seeking increased knowledge and supervision counselors are still unable to meet the needs of a particular client, they do what is necessary to put the client in contact with an appropriate mental health resource.

V. Recommended AMHCA Training

AMHCA recommends that Clinical Mental Health Counselors have specialized training in addition to the generally agreed upon course areas endorsed by CACREP. These include the biological bases of behavior, clinical assessment, trauma, and co-occurring disorders. Knowledge and skills related to the biological bases of behavior may be covered in a single course or more commonly across several courses or domains of inquiry. The skills outlined in this document can be measured through standardized testing, participation in class or team role-playing exercises, reviews of treatment plans, and reviews of progress notes in field work settings. It is recommended that the following be addressed for students in mental health counseling programs of study.

A. Biological Bases of Behavior

Knowledge

1. Understands the organization of the central nervous system.
2. Understands the role of plasticity and recovery of the brain across the lifespan.
3. Possesses introductory knowledge of the neurobiology of thinking, emotion, and memory.
4. Understands current information about the neurobiology of mental health disorders (Mood, Anxiety and Psychotic Disorders) across the lifespan.
5. Possesses an awareness of basic screening tools used to assess CNS functioning.
6. Possesses basic understanding of reproductive health and prenatal development and how the brain changes across the lifespan.
7. Understands the process of early development including attachment and social environmental factors that influence brain development.
8. Possesses knowledge about Dementia, Delirium and Amnesia.
9. Understands how drugs are absorbed, metabolized and eliminated.
10. Possesses knowledge about disorders and symptoms that may indicate the need for medication.
11. Possesses working knowledge about antidepressants, antipsychotics, anxiolytics, mood stabilizers, cognitive enhancers and drugs of abuse.

Skills

1. Demonstrates the ability to counsel clients and describe to colleagues the basic organization of the brain as it may relate to mental health.
2. Demonstrates the ability to counsel clients and work with colleagues to understand the ability of the CNS to change and adapt to life circumstances including traumatic brain injury, physical and sexual abuse and substance abuse.
3. Discusses with clients and colleagues how the neurobiology of thinking, emotion, memory can impact behavior.
4. Identifies current research findings and resources about the neurobiology of mental disorders and discuss these findings with clients and colleagues.
5. Identifies and briefly describes common assessment instruments used in brief neuropsychological screening instruments.
6. Demonstrates a working knowledge of the biology of reproduction and prenatal development and discuss with clients and colleagues.
7. Counsels clients from a biologically grounded lifespan developmental approach.
8. Understands and describes the aging brain and how it may change across the lifespan.
9. Understands and explains to clients, family and colleagues the most common signs and symptoms of dementia and strategies to improve functioning.
10. Describes how the body metabolizes drugs and the names of drugs commonly used to treat mental disorders and drugs of abuse.
11. Identifies the most common side effects for the most commonly used medications.
12. Counsels clients about how to communicate with providers regarding the risks and benefits of medication, method of adherence, and common side effects.

B. Specialized Clinical Assessment

(Summarized and adapted from the AMHCA-AACE joint agreement 2009)

Knowledge

1. Identifies the purposes, strengths and limitations of objective clinical mental health assessment instruments including:
 - a. Advantages and disadvantages of qualitative assessment procedures.
 - b. Differences and advantages of structured and semi-structured clinical interviews.
 - c. The use of structured and semi-structured clinical interviews to develop goal setting and treatment plans in clinical mental health counseling practice.
 - d. Limitations of clinical mental health assessment instruments in diagnosing thoughts, emotions, behavior or psychopathology of socially and culturally diverse clients across the lifespan. Defines and describes the various types of reliability and validity, as well as measures of error, in clinical mental health assessment instruments.
2. Identifies acceptable levels of reliability and validity for personality, projective, intelligence, career and specialty assessment instruments.
3. Identifies where and how to locate and obtain information about assessment instruments commonly used within clinical mental health counseling.
4. Identifies the means to locate and obtain clinical mental health assessment instruments for special populations (e.g. visually impaired persons, non-readers).
5. Understands how to use assessment instruments according to the intended purpose of the instrument.
6. Understands how to use assessment instruments in research according to legal and ethical practices to protect participants.
7. Understands the use of clinical assessment instruments and procedures in the evaluation of treatment outcomes and mental health treatment programs.

Skills

1. Demonstrates the ability to select, administer, score, analyze, and interpret clinical mental health assessment instruments.
2. Demonstrates the ability to use computer-administered and scored assessment instruments.
3. Demonstrates the ability to use the mental status examination, interviewing procedures, and formal clinical assessment instruments to assess psychopathology among socially and culturally diverse clients across the lifespan.
4. Demonstrates the ability to use personality, projective, intelligence, career, and specialty instruments to develop counseling plans and clinical interventions.
5. Develops mental health evaluation reports, diagnosis, and treat plans from multiple assessment sources (e.g. direct observation, assessment instruments, and structured clinical interviews).
6. Demonstrates the ability to follow legal and ethical principles for informed consent and confidentiality when using assessments.
7. Communicates assessment instruments results in manner that benefits clients.
8. Presents assessment results to clients and other nonprofessional audiences using clear, unambiguous, jargon-free language that recognizes both client strengths and client problems, and communicates respect and compassion.
9. Demonstrates the ability to select standardized instruments that can measure treatment outcomes and design evaluations to assess mental health treatment program efficacy.
10. Complies with the most recent codes of ethics of the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA), American Counseling Association (ACA), and National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) (if certified), and with the laws and regulations of the licensing board in any state in which the counselor is licensed to practice clinical mental health counseling.
11. Practices in accordance with the Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education, Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, Responsibilities of User of Standardized Tests, and Rights and of Test Takers: Guidelines and Expectations.

C. Trauma Training Standards

Knowledge

1. Recognizes that the type and context of trauma has important implications for its etiology, diagnosis and treatment (e.g. ongoing sexual abuse in childhood is qualitatively different from war trauma for young adult soldiers).
2. Knows how trauma-causing events may impact individuals differently in relation to social context, age, gender, and culture/ethnicity.
3. Understands the distinctions among relational, acute, chronic, episodic, and developmental traumas, and the implications of these for treatment.
4. Understands the impact of various types of trauma (e.g. sexual and physical abuse, war, chronic verbal/emotional abuse, neglect) may have on the central nervous system and how this might impact attachment styles, affect regulation, personality functioning, self-identity, and trauma re-enactment.
5. Recognizes the long-term consequences of trauma-causing events on communities and cultures.
6. Understands resiliency factors for individuals, groups and communities that diminish the risk of trauma related disorders.
7. Understands the application of established counseling theories to trauma treatment.
8. Recognizes differential strategies and approaches necessary to work with children and adolescents in trauma treatment.

Skills

1. Demonstrates the ability to assess and differentiate the clinical impact of various trauma-causing events.
2. Demonstrates the ability to use established counseling theories, and evidence-based trauma resolution practices, to promote the integration of brain functioning and help resolve cognitive, emotional, sensory, and behavioral symptoms related to trauma-causing events for socially and culturally diverse clients across the lifespan.
3. Demonstrates the ability to facilitate client resilience and to resolve long-term alterations in attributions and expectancies.

4. Demonstrates sensitivity to individual and psychosocial factors that interact with trauma-causing events in counseling and treatment planning.
5. Demonstrates the ability to recognize the impact of his/her trauma may impact counseling trauma survivors.
6. Uses differentially appropriate strategies and approaches in assessing and working with children and adolescents in trauma treatment.
7. Uses differentially appropriate counseling and other treatment interventions in the treatment of developmental and chronic traumas.

D. Co-Occurring Disorders

Knowledge

1. Understands the epidemiology of substance use and co-occurring disorders for socially and culturally diverse populations at risk across the lifespan.
2. Understands theories about the etiology of substance use and co-occurring disorders including risk and resiliency factors for individuals, groups and communities.
3. Possesses a working knowledge of the neurobiological basis of addiction, and the mechanisms that underlie substance use disorders.
4. Understands how drugs work including routes of administration, drug distribution, elimination, dependence, withdrawal, dose response interaction, and how to interpret basic lab results.
5. Recognizes the potentials for addictive disorders to mimic a variety of medical and psychological disorders and to cause such disorders.
6. Understands treatment and clinical management of common co-occurring disorders (anxiety, depression, PTSD and trauma-related disorders, dissociative disorders, personality disorders, eating disorders, psychotic disorders, disruptive behavior, and mood disorders) with substance use disorders.
7. Understands the current history, philosophy, and trends in substance abuse counseling including treatment relying on stages of change (e.g. motivational interviewing) and self-help (AA and NA).
8. Understands ethical and legal considerations related to the practice of addiction, and co-occurring disorders in diverse settings including inpatient units and the criminal justice system.

Skills

1. Demonstrates the ability to screen clients' stage of readiness for change and gauge the severity of their co-occurring disorders.
2. Conceptualizes cases using stage-wise approach to addiction and mental health treatment, and develop a treatment plan based on the conceptualization that addresses mental health and addiction issues simultaneously.
3. Demonstrates skills in applying motivational enhancement strategies to engage clients.
4. Provides appropriate counseling strategies when working with clients co-occurring disorders.
5. Demonstrates the ability to provide counseling and education about substance use disorders, and mental/emotional disorders to families and others who are affected by clients with co-occurring disorders.
6. Demonstrates the ability to modify counseling systems, theories, techniques, and interventions for socially and culturally diverse clients across the lifespan with co-occurring disorders.
7. Demonstrates the ability to recognize his/her own limitations as a co-occurring disorder counselor and to seek supervision or refer clients when appropriate.
8. Demonstrates the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in addiction and co-occurring disorder counseling.

