

Overview of the Eight Topical Sections on the Comps

1. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT - studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels, including all of the following:

- a. theories of individual and family development and transitions across the life-span;
- b. theories of learning and personality development;
- c. human behavior including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, exceptional behavior, addictive behavior, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior;
- d. strategies for facilitating optimum development over the life-span; and
- e. ethical and legal considerations.

2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY - studies that provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society related to such factors as culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical characteristics, education, family values, religious and spiritual values, socioeconomic status and unique characteristics of individuals, couples, families, ethnic groups, and communities including all of the following:

- a. multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns between and within diverse groups nationally and internationally;
- b. attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities;
- c. individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with diverse populations and ethnic groups;
- d. counselors' roles in social justice , advocacy and conflict resolution, cultural self-awareness, the nature of biases, prejudices, processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination, and other culturally supported behaviors that are detrimental to the growth of the human spirit, mind, or body;
- e. theories of multicultural counseling, theories of identity development , and multicultural competencies; and
- f. ethical and legal considerations .

3. HELPING RELATIONSHIP - studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes, including all of the following:

- a. counselor and consultant characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes including age, gender, and ethnic differences, verbal and nonverbal behaviors and personal characteristics, orientations, and skills;
- b. an understanding of essential interviewing and counseling skills so that the student is able to develop a therapeutic relationship, establish appropriate counseling goals,

design intervention strategies, evaluate client outcome, and successfully terminate the counselor-client relationship. Studies will also facilitate student self-awareness so that the counselor-client relationship is therapeutic and the counselor maintains appropriate professional boundaries;

c. counseling theories that provide the student with a consistent model(s) to conceptualize client presentation and select appropriate counseling interventions. Student experiences should include an examination of the historical development of counseling theories, an exploration of affective, behavioral, and cognitive theories, and an opportunity to apply the theoretical material to case studies. Students will also be exposed to models of counseling that are consistent with current professional research and practice in the field so that they can begin to develop a personal model of counseling;

d. a systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions. Students will be exposed to a rationale for selecting family and other systems theories as appropriate modalities for family assessment and counseling;

e. a general framework for understanding and practicing consultation. Student experiences should include an examination of the historical development of consultation, an exploration of the stages of consultation and the major models of consultation, and an opportunity to apply the theoretical material to case presentations. Students will begin to develop a personal model of consultation;

f. integration of technological strategies and applications within counseling and consultation processes; and

g. ethical and legal considerations.

4. GROUP WORK - studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, counseling theories, group counseling methods and skills, and other group approaches, including all of the following:

a. principles of group dynamics, including group process components, developmental stage theories, group members' roles and behaviors, and therapeutic factors of group work;

b. group leadership styles and approaches, including characteristics of various types of group leaders and leadership styles;

c. theories of group counseling, including commonalities, distinguishing characteristics, and pertinent research and literature;

d. group counseling methods, including group counselor orientations and behaviors, appropriate selection criteria and methods, and methods of evaluation of effectiveness;

e. approaches used for other types of group work, including task groups, psychoeducational groups, and therapy groups;

- f. professional preparation standards for group leaders; and
- g. ethical and legal considerations.

5. CAREER DEVELOPMENT - studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors, including all of the following:

- a. career development theories and decision-making models;
- b. career, avocational, educational, occupational and labor market information resources, visual and print media, computer-based career information systems, and other electronic career information systems;
- c. career development program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation;
- d. interrelationships among and between work, family, and other life roles and factors including the role of diversity and gender in career development;
- e. career and educational planning , placement , follow-up, and evaluation;
- f. assessment instruments and techniques that are relevant to career planning and decision making;
- g. technology-based career development applications and strategies, including computer-assisted career guidance and information systems and appropriate world-wide web sites;
- h. career counseling processes, techniques, and resources, including those applicable to specific populations; and
- i. ethical and legal considerations.

6. ASSESSMENT - studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation, including all of the following:

- a. historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment;
- b. basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing and other assessment techniques including norm referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, behavioral observations, and computer-managed and computer-assisted methods;
- c. statistical concepts, including scales of measurement , measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations;
- d. reliability (i.e., theory of measurement error, models of reliability, and the use of reliability information);
- e. validity (i.e., evidence of validity, types of validity, and the relationship between reliability and validity);
- f. age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, disability, culture, spirituality, and other factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations;

- g. strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in counseling;
- h. an understanding of general principles and methods of case conceptualization, assessment, and/or diagnoses of mental and emotional status; and
- i. ethical and legal considerations.

7. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION - studies that provide an understanding of research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation, including all of the following:

- a. the importance of research and opportunities and difficulties in conducting research in the counseling profession,
- b. research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research;
- c. use of technology and statistical methods in conducting research and program evaluation, assuming basic computer literacy;
- d. principles, models, and applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and use of findings to effect program modifications;
- e. use of research to improve counseling effectiveness; and
- f. ethical and legal considerations.

8. PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICES - studies that provide an understanding of all of the following aspects of professional functioning:

- a. history and philosophy of the counseling profession, including significant factors and events;
- b. professional roles, functions, and relationships with other human service providers;
- c. technological competence and computer literacy;
- d. professional organizations, primarily ACA, its divisions, branches, and affiliates, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current emphases;
- e. professional credentialing, including certification, licensure, and accreditation practices and standards, and the effects of public policy on these issues;
- f. public and private policy processes, including the role of the professional counselor in advocating on behalf of the profession;
- g. advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients; and
- h. ethical standards of ACA and related entities, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling.