



National Counselor Examination (NCE) Detailed Content Outline

I. Fundamental Counseling Issues:

This section encompasses counseling tasks related to the professional counselor's theoretical and applied knowledge to address the client's multifaceted issues.

Theory and application of counseling clients with issues related to:

1. Abuse (e.g., physical, sexual, emotional)
2. Adjustment
3. Anxiety
4. Bereavement
5. Caregiving
6. Crisis
7. Culture
8. Delirium and Dementia
9. Disorders of Mood
10. Disorders Usually First Diagnosed in Infancy, Childhood, or Adolescence
11. Dissociative Disorders
12. Divorce
13. Eating
14. Education
15. End of Life
16. Factitious Disorders
17. Family
18. General Medical Conditions
19. Growth and Development
20. Health
21. Impulse Control
22. Lifestyle
23. Marriage
24. Marriage Preparation
25. Occupation and Career
26. Parenting

27. Personality Disorders
28. Process Addictions (e.g., gambling, sex, internet)
29. Psychosomatic Disorders
30. Relationships
31. Religion
32. Reproduction
33. Retirement
34. Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders
35. Sex and Gender Identity
36. Sleep Disorders
37. Socialization
38. Spirituality
39. Substance Abuse and Dependence
40. Trauma

II. Counseling Process

This section addresses tasks necessary for structuring, directing, and facilitating counseling sessions, as well as treatment interventions.

Structure the counseling process for individuals, couples, families, or groups by:

1. Assessing one's appropriateness for working with a specific client
2. Assessing the course of development
3. Conducting a diagnostic interview
4. Conducting distance counseling (e.g., online, phone)
5. Conducting school/community outreach
6. Consulting with clients' support system (e.g., collateral contact)
7. Consulting with legal counsel
8. Determining need for referral for other services
9. Developing an initial treatment plan
10. Directing community initiatives/programs
11. Establishing therapeutic alliance
12. Establishing therapeutic goals
13. Explaining counselor and client roles
14. Explaining guidelines for participation
15. Exploring cultural values and more
16. Facilitating client access to community resources (Medicare, Medicaid, rehab, etc.)
17. Facilitating conflict resolution
18. Facilitating exercises/activities
19. Facilitating interpersonal feedback
20. Following ethical standards

21. Following state and federal legal standards
22. Fostering the emergence of therapeutic/curative factors
23. Helping clients develop support systems
24. Identifying barriers affecting client goal attainment
25. Identifying client concerns
26. Identifying client's support system (community and family)
27. Identifying destructive and disruptive behaviors
28. Identifying dynamics
29. Identifying therapeutic stages
30. Informing clients about the legal aspects of counseling
31. Informing clients of practice guidelines
32. Informing family members of family counseling guidelines
33. Integrating test results into treatment plans
34. Intervening in destructive and disruptive behaviors
35. Maintaining case notes, records, and files
36. Maintaining security of confidentiality of case notes, records, and files
37. Monitoring compliance with medical treatment
38. Obtaining authorization for exchange of client information
39. Obtaining informed consent
40. Obtaining pre-authorization from third-party payors
41. Planning
42. Planning for discharge
43. Providing adequate accommodations for clients with disabilities
44. Providing client follow-up
45. Providing counseling services in the client's preferred language
46. Providing counseling services to English language learners
47. Providing psychoeducation
48. Reviewing and revising the treatment plan
49. Screening
50. Selecting appropriate interventions
51. Terminating counseling relationship
52. Triaging clients for service
53. Using computer-based career information systems (e.g., DISCOVER, SIGI+)
54. Using dynamics
55. Writing clinical reports

III. Diagnostic and Assessment Services

This section addresses the professional counselor's application and effective diagnostic and assessment procedures.

Conduct assessment of client by:

1. Assessing client's educational preparation
2. Assessing potential for harm to self and others
3. Conducting a biopsychosocial interview
4. Conducting an initial assessment
5. Conducting custody evaluations
6. Conducting forensic evaluations
7. Conducting functional behavioral analysis
8. Diagnosing based on current Character Strengths and Virtues (CSV) criteria
9. Diagnosing based on current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) criteria
10. Diagnosing based on current International Classification of Diseases (ICD) criteria
11. Implementing tests for client decision-making
12. Observing non-verbal behaviors
13. Performing a mental status exam (MSE)
14. Selecting appropriate assessment instruments
15. Selecting appropriate assessment strategies
16. Using test results to facilitate client decision-making
17. Administering achievement tests
18. Administering aptitude tests
19. Administering behavioral scales and checklists
20. Administering diagnostic inventories (e.g., mood, anxiety, addictions)
21. Administering intelligence tests
22. Administering occupational inventories
23. Administering structured diagnostic interviews (projective)
24. Interpreting achievement tests
25. Interpreting aptitude tests
26. Interpreting behavioral scales and checklists
27. Interpreting diagnostic inventories (e.g., mood, anxiety, addictions)
28. Interpreting intelligence tests
29. Interpreting occupational inventories
30. Interpreting personality inventories
31. Interpreting structured diagnostic interviews (projective)

IV. Professional Practice

This section encompasses professional counseling activities typically undertaken as adjuncts to direct client service. Tasks in this section also include behaviors associated with the application of skills characteristic of the in-session counseling process.

Provide professional service by:

1. Advocating for client needs
2. Advocating for the profession of counseling
3. Applying career counseling interventions
4. Applying current counseling research
5. Applying multicultural counseling models
6. Assessing one's own effectiveness as a counselor
7. Collaborating in research with other professionals
8. Conducting case management
9. Conducting distance counseling (e.g., online, phone)
10. Conducting school/community outreach
11. Conducting training on the use of computer-based information systems
12. Developing community relationships with potential employers
13. Developing counseling service promotional materials
14. Developing referral resources
15. Directing community initiatives/programs
16. Empowering clients
17. Engaging in counseling research
18. Engaging in data analysis
19. Organizing employer fairs
20. Participating in continuing education
21. Participating in media interviews
22. Providing appropriate safeguards for computer use in counseling
23. Providing coaching services
24. Providing continuing education courses/workshops
25. Providing expert testimony
26. Providing mediation services
27. Reporting abuse to the proper authorities
28. Researching counseling issues and techniques on the internet
29. Supervising contact/visitation between family members
30. Teaching in a counselor education program
31. Testifying in court proceedings
32. Working appropriately with third-party payors
33. Writing articles for non-professional audiences
34. Writing articles for professional publication

Practice counseling techniques by implementing:

35. Basic attending skills (e.g., active listening)
36. Collaborative goal setting
37. Communication skills
38. Decision-making skills training
39. Empathic responding
40. Evidence-based (empirically supported) treatments
41. Interview skills training
42. Job search skills training
43. Outplacement counseling
44. Reframing skills
45. Relationship-building skills

V. Professional Development, Supervision, and Consultation

This section covers tasks related to the development and maintenance of counselor identity, competence, and professional collaboration.

1. Communicate with credentialing boards
2. Consult with justice system
3. Consult with peers or other professionals
4. Consult with prescribers about medications
5. Consult with professional organizations
6. Consult with school staff
7. Participate in a peer consultation group
8. Participate in multidisciplinary team meetings
9. Provide clinical supervision
10. Provide services for impaired counselors
11. Receive clinical supervision
12. Report ethical and legal violations
13. Supervise counselors-in-training
14. Supervise paraprofessionals
15. Supervise volunteers
16. Contain and manage personal anxiety
17. Express personal experience in the here and now
18. Maintain appropriate boundaries
19. Monitor and address personal compassion fatigue (burnout) potential
20. Monitor countertransference
21. Monitor personal strengths and limitations
22. Monitor self-reflective vs. self-absorbed states of mind
23. Practice emotional expressiveness
24. Receive personal counseling