

OU Masters in Counseling

Counselor Competency and Fitness Statement

Oakland University's counseling programs are required, as CACREP-accredited programs, to hold students to the highest professional, personal, and ethical standards. The ACA *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, Section F.3.a, states in part, "Counselors, through ongoing evaluation and appraisal, are aware of the academic and personal limitations of students and supervisees that might impede performance. Counselors assist students and supervisees in securing remedial assistance when needed, and dismiss from the training programs supervisees who are unable to provide competent service due to academic or personal limitations" (pp. 15-16). The *Ethical Guidelines for Counseling Supervisors*, Published by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, states in guideline 2.12: "Supervisors have the responsibility of recommending remedial assistance to the supervisee and of screening from the training program, applied counseling setting, or state licensure those supervisees who are unable to provide competent professional services. These recommendations should be clearly and professionally explained in writing to the supervisees who are so evaluated."

In the counseling program and counseling courses you will be required to demonstrate competencies that cannot always be adequately evaluated based on written assignments and classroom discussion alone. Therefore passing grades requires successful performance on nine factors that have been established as essential for performance as a competent and ethical counselor (M. Wiggins-Frame & P. Stevens-Smith, *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 35, pp 118-128, 1995). You are expected to be: 1) open, 2) flexible, 3) positive, 4) cooperative, 5) willing to use and accept feedback, 6) aware of impact on others, 7) able to deal with conflict, 8) able to accept personal responsibility, and 9) able to express feelings effectively and appropriately. The counseling profession is both interpersonal and performance based. Therefore behaviors which are evidenced by complaints and/or repeated concerns include some but not all of the following:

- (1) Unprofessional and/or Unethical conduct
- (2) Behaviors that place clients at risk during field placement, including current substance abuse problems; exploitation of clients; emotional, physical or verbal abuse; vindictive action toward clients; or stealing from clients
- (3) Inability to provide effective services to clients.
- (4) Behavioral displays of mental or emotional difficulties that represent a risk to others
- (5) Consistent inability or unwillingness to carry out academic or field placement responsibilities
- (6) Frequent excuse making when tasks, assignments, tests, and/or appointments are not completed in a timely manner or require rescheduling
- (7) Consistent nonattendance and/or tardiness in classes, at field placement and other required departmental functions
- (8) Lack of insight into negative consequences of own behavior and frequent blame of others or external factors for failures and difficulties in the academic or field placement environment
- (9) Inability to tolerate different points of view, constructive feedback or supervision
- (10) Failure to maintain regular contact with supervisors, which includes keeping them apprised of clinical and ethical issues pertaining to clients.
- (11) Dishonest academic practices, including but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aiding and abetting deception or dishonesty, and the falsification of records or official documents.
- (12) Verbal or physical aggressiveness toward others

You will be informed by your instructor if your performance on any of these factors is substandard and will be given specific, written feedback with guidelines for improvement following our procedures for maintaining competency and fitness (See Guidelines for Procedures of Violation of Competency and Fitness).

Counseling not only demands the highest levels of performance, it also subjects counselors to stresses and challenges that may threaten individuals' coping abilities. Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate mental and emotional functioning to work effectively with clients and colleagues. The resources and references listed below may be helpful to students.

References

Baird, B. N. (2011). *The internship, practicum, and field placement handbook: a guide for the helping professions* (6th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Corey, G., Corey, M. S., & Callanan, P. (1993). *Issues and ethics in the helping professions* (4th ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Kottler, J. A. (2011) *The therapist's workbook: Self-assessment, self-care, and self-improvement exercises for mental health professionals* (2nd edition). San Francisco: John Wiley & Son.

Morrisette, P. J. (2001). *Self-supervision: A primer for counselors and helping professionals*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

National Resources

American Counseling Association Ethical Standards:

<http://www.counseling.org/Resources/CodeOfEthics/TP/Home/CT2.aspx>

American Counseling Association Resources:

<http://counseling.org/Students/>

University Resources

Academic Skills Center: <http://www.oakland.edu/asc>

Disability Support Services: <http://www.oakland.edu/dss>

Kresge Library Tutorials for Plagiarism and APA style: <http://library.oakland.edu/tutorials/index.htm>

Mental and Physical Health Services for students:

<http://www.oakland.edu/ghc/>

Student Resources:

<http://www.counseling.org/Students/>

Writing Center:

<http://www.oakland.edu/ouwc>