***National Career Development Association***

**Minimum Competencies for Multicultural**

**Career Counseling and Development**

**Introduction to Career Counseling Competency Statements**

These competency statements are for those professionals interested and trained in the field of career counseling. For the purpose of these statements, career counseling is defined as the process of assisting individuals in the development of a life-career with focus on the definition of the worker role and how that role interacts with other life roles.

NCDA’s Multicultural Career Counseling Competencies are intended to represent minimum competencies for those professionals at or above the master’s degree level of education. These competencies are reviewed on an ongoing basis by the NCDA Board, Credentialing Commission, and other relevant associations.

Professional competency statements provide guidance for the minimum competencies necessary to effectively perform a particular occupation or job within a particular field. Professional career counselors (Master’s degree or higher) or persons in career development positions must demonstrate the knowledge and skills for a specialty in career counseling that the generalist counselor might not possess. Skills and knowledge are represented by designated competency areas, which have been developed by professional career counselors and counselor educators. The NCDA Multicultural Career Counseling Competencies can serve as a guide for career counseling training programs or as a checklist for persons wanting to acquire or to enhance their skills in career counseling.

The multicultural component was added to ensure that all individuals practicing in, or training for practice in, the career counseling and development field are aware of the expectation that we, as professionals, will practice in ways that promote the career development and functioning of individuals of all backgrounds. Promotion and advocacy of career development for individuals is ensured regardless of age, culture, mental/physical ability, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion/spirituality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/partnership status, military or civilian status, language preference, socioeconomic status, any other characteristics not specifically relevant to job performance, in accordance with NCDA and ACA policy. Further, they will provide guidance to those in the career counseling and development field regarding appropriate practice regarding clients of a different background than their own. Finally, implementation of these competencies for the field should provide the public with the assurance that they can expect career counseling and development professionals to function in a manner that facilitates their career development, regardless of the client’s/student’s background.

**Minimum Competencies**

To work as a professional engaged in Career Counseling, the individual must demonstrate minimum competencies in nine designated areas. These areas are: Career Development Theory, Individual and Group Counseling Skills, Individual/Group Assessment, Information/Resources/Technology, Program Management and Implementation, Consultation, Supervision, Ethical/Legal Issues, and Research/Evaluation. These areas are briefly defined as follows:

* **Career Development Theory:** Theory base and knowledge considered essential for professionals engaging in career counseling and development.
* **Individual and Group Counseling Skills:**  Individual and group counseling competencies considered essential for effective career counseling.
* **Individual/Group Assessment:** Individual/group assessment skills considered essential for professionals engaging in career counseling.
* **Information/Resources/Technology:** Information/resource/technology knowledge and skills essential for professionals engaging in career counseling.
* **Program Promotion, Management, and Implementation:** Skills necessary to develop, plan, implement, and manage comprehensive career development programs in a variety of settings.
* **Coaching, Consultation, and Performance Improvement:** Knowledge and skills considered essential in enabling individuals and organizations to impact effectively upon the career counseling and development process.
* **Supervision:** Knowledge and skills considered essential in critically evaluating counselor performance, maintaining, and improving professional skills, and seeking assistance for others when needed in career counseling.
* **Ethical/Legal Issues:** Information base and knowledge essential for the ethical and legal practice of career counseling.
* **Research/Evaluation:** Knowledge and skills considered essential in understanding and conducting research and evaluation in career counseling and development.

**Professional Preparation**

The competency statements were developed to serve as guidelines for persons interested in career development occupations. They are intended for persons training at the master’s level or higher with a specialty in career counseling. However, this intention does not prevent other types of career development professionals from using the competencies as guidelines for their own training. The competency statements provide counselor educators, supervisors, and other interested groups with guidelines for the minimum training required for counselors interested in the career counseling specialty. The statements might also serve as guidelines for professional counselors who seek in-service training to qualify as career counselors.

**Ethical Responsibilities**

Career development professionals must only perform activities for which they "possess or have access to the necessary skills and resources for giving the kind of help that is needed" (see NCDA and ACA Ethical Standards). If a professional does not have the appropriate training or resources for the type of career concern presented, an appropriate referral must be made. No person should attempt to use skills (within these competency statements) for which he/she has not been trained. For additional ethical guidelines, refer to the NCDA Ethical Standards for Career Counselors.

**Career Counseling Competencies and Performance Indicators**

**Career Development Theory**

Theory base and knowledge considered essential for professionals engaging in career counseling and development and understand the strengths and limitations of career theory and utilizes theories that are appropriate for the population being served. Demonstration of knowledge of:

1. Counseling theories and associated techniques.

2. Theories and models of career development.

3. Individual differences related to gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and physical and mental capacities.

4. Theoretical models for career development and associated counseling and information-delivery techniques and resources.

5. Human growth and development throughout the life span.

6. Role relationships which facilitate life-work planning.

7. Information, techniques, and models related to career planning and placement

**Individual and Group Counseling Skills**

Individual and group counseling competencies considered essential to effective career counseling being aware of his/her own cultural beliefs and assumptions and incorporates that awareness into his/her decision-making about interactions with clients/students and other career professionals. Demonstration of ability to:

1. Establish and maintain productive personal relationships with individuals.

2. Establish and maintain a productive group climate.

3. Collaborate with clients in identifying personal goals.

4. Identify and select techniques appropriate to client or group goals and client needs, psychological states, and developmental tasks.

5. Identify and understand clients’ personal characteristics related to career.

6. Identify and understand social contextual conditions affecting clients’ careers.

7. Identify and understand familial, sub-cultural and cultural structures and functions as they are related to clients’ careers.

8. Identify and understand clients’ career decision-making processes.

9. Identify and understand clients’ attitudes toward work and workers.

10. Identify and understand clients’ biases toward work and workers based on gender, race, and cultural stereotypes.

11. Challenge and encourage clients to take action to prepare for and initiate role transitions by:

* locating sources of relevant information and experience,
* obtaining and interpreting information and experiences, and acquiring skills needed to make role transitions.

12. Assist the client to acquire a set of employability and job search skills.

13. Support and challenge clients to examine life-work roles, including the balance of work, leisure, family, and community in their careers.

14. Continue to develop individual and group counseling skills in order to enhance ability to respond appropriately to individuals from diverse populations.

15. Remain cognizant when working with groups of the group demographics and monitors these to ensure appropriate respect and confidentiality is maintained.

**Individual/Group Assessment**

Individual/group assessment skills considered essential for professionals engaging in career counseling and understanding the psychometric properties of the assessments being used to effectively select and administer assessments and interpret and use results with the appropriate limitations and cautions. Demonstration of ability to:

1. Assess personal characteristics such as aptitude, achievement, interests, values, and personality traits.
2. Assess leisure interests, learning style, life roles, self-concept, career maturity, vocational identity, career indecision, work environment preference (e.g., work satisfaction), and other related lifestyle/development issues.
3. Assess conditions of the work environment (such as tasks, expectations, norms, and qualities of the physical and social settings).
4. Evaluate and select valid and reliable instruments appropriate to the client’s gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and physical and mental capacities.
5. Use computer-delivered assessment measures effectively and appropriately.
6. Select assessment techniques appropriate for group administration and those appropriate for individual administration.
7. Administer, score, and report findings from career assessment instruments appropriately.
8. Interpret data from assessment instruments and present the results to clients and to others.
9. Assist the client and others designated by the client to interpret data from assessment instruments.
10. Write an accurate report of assessment results.

**Information, Resources, and Technology**

Information/resources/technology base and knowledge essential for professionals engaging in career counseling. Demonstration of knowledge of:

1. Education, training, and employment trends; labor market information and resources that provide information about job tasks, functions, salaries, requirements, and future outlooks related to broad occupational fields and individual occupations.
2. Knowledge of information, resources, and the use of technology to determine that these tools are sensitive to the needs of diverse populations amending and/or individualizing for each client as required.
3. Knowledge of resources in multiple formats to ensure that clients/students can benefit from needed information.
4. Concludes targeted and sensitive support for clients/students in using the information, resources, and technology.

**Program Promotion, Management, and Implementation**

Knowledge and skills necessary to develop, plan, implement, and manage comprehensive career development programs in a variety of settings. Demonstration of knowledge of:

1. Designs that can be used in the organization of career development programs and incorporates appropriate guidelines, research, and experience in developing, implementing, and managing programs and services for diverse populations.
2. Needs assessment and principles of program evaluation to design and obtain feedback from relevant stakeholders in the continuous improvement of programs and services, paying special attention to feedback regarding specific needs of the population being served.
3. Knowledge of multicultural issues in dealings with other professionals and trainees to ensure the creation of a culturally sensitive environment for all clients.
4. Knowledge of organizational theories, including diagnosis, behavior, planning, organizational communication, and management useful in implementing and administering career development programs.
5. Methods of forecasting, budgeting, planning, costing, policy analysis, resource allocation, and quality control.
6. Leadership theories and approaches for evaluation and feedback, organizational change, decision-making, and conflict resolution.
7. Professional standards and criteria for career development programs.
8. Societal trends and state and federal legislation that influence the development and implementation of career development programs.   
     
   *Demonstration of ability to:*
9. Implement individual and group programs in career development for specified populations.
10. Train others about the appropriate use of computer-based systems for career information and planning.
11. Plan, organize, and manage a comprehensive career resource center.
12. Implement career development programs in collaboration with others.
13. Identify and evaluate staff competencies.
14. Mount a marketing and public relations campaign on behalf of career development activities and services.

**Coaching, Consultation, and Performance Improvement**

Knowledge and skills considered essential in relating to individuals and organizations that impact the career counseling and development process. Demonstration of ability to:

1. Engaging in coaching, consultation, and performance improvement activities with appropriate training and incorporates knowledge of multicultural attitudes, beliefs, skills, and values.
2. Establish and maintain a productive consultative relationship with people who can influence a client’s career.
3. Exhibits awareness and understanding about how to best match diverse clients/students with suitably culturally sensitive employers.
4. Help the public and legislators to understand the importance of career counseling, career development, and life-work planning.
5. Impact public policy as it relates to career development and workforce planning.
6. Analyze future organizational needs and current level of employee skills and develop performance improvement training.
7. Mentor and coach employees.

**Supervision**

Knowledge and skills considered essential in critically evaluating counselor or career development service provider performance, maintaining, and improving professional skills. Demonstration of:

1. Knowledge of evidence-based supervision and educational and training activities for inclusive of both counseling and supervision topics.
2. Ability to recognize personal cultural biases and personal values and seeks professional consultative assistance as necessary.
3. Ability to infuse multicultural/diversity contexts into personal training and supervision practices, makes supervisees aware of the ethical standards and responsibilities of the profession, and trains supervisees to develop relevant multicultural knowledge and skills.
4. Ability to consult with supervisors and colleagues regarding client and counseling issues and issues related to one’s own professional development as a career counselor.
5. Knowledge of supervision models and theories.
6. Ability to provide effective supervision to career counselors and career development service providers at different levels of experience.
7. Ability to provide effective supervision to career development service providers at different levels of experience by:

* knowledge of their roles, competencies, and ethical standards
* determining their competence in each of the areas included in their certification and credentialing.
* further training them in competencies, including interpretation of assessment instruments
* monitoring and mentoring their activities in support of the professional career counselor; and scheduling regular consultations for the purpose of reviewing their activities

**Ethical/Legal Issues**

Information base and knowledge essential for the ethical and legal practice of career counseling. Demonstration of knowledge of:

1. Adherence to ethical codes and standards relevant to the profession of career counseling (e.g., NBCC, NCDA, and ACA).
2. Current multicultural and diversity issues and research and applies new knowledge as required.
3. Knowledge and experience of multicultural ethical and legal issues within a professional framework to enhance the functioning of the organization and the image of the profession.
4. Utilizes supervision and professional consultations effectively when faced with an ethical or legal issue related to diversity, to ensure high-quality services for every client/student.
5. Knowledge of state and federal statutes relating to client confidentiality.

**Research/Evaluation**

Knowledge and skills considered essential in understanding and conducting research and evaluation in career counseling and development. Demonstration of ability to:

1. Write a research proposal.
2. Designs and implements culturally appropriate research studies about research designs, instrument selection, and other pertinent population-specific issues.
3. Convey research findings related to the effectiveness of career counseling programs.
4. Design, conduct, and use the results of evaluation programs.
5. Design evaluation programs which consider the need of various diverse populations, including persons of both genders, differing sexual orientations, different ethnic and racial backgrounds, and differing physical and mental capacities.
6. Apply appropriate statistical procedures to career development research.

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