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# Preface

## Counselor as Consultant

*Counselor As Consultant* is designed to address specific competencies identified as essential to developing an understanding of the processes of professional consultation and the development of a counselor's identity as a consultant (see Table AP-1). The material presented not only addresses those competencies identified by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2009) as fundamental for counselors as consultants but also provides a framework for *all mental health professionals* who are interested in providing consultation services.

Specifically, the text

- provides the reader with a view of the goals of consultation, including an introduction to the notion of integrating a wellness paradigm into the dual notions of the counselor's identity as a consultant and as a means of facilitating positive and effective consultation outcomes;
- encourages readers to reflect on and address their personal and professional motives for becoming a professional consultant, including their personal state of wellness and/or life adjustments that may be necessary in order to establish and maintain the level of "best practice" as a consultant;
- highlights consultant characteristics and behaviors that influence consultation relationships and processes;
- identifies, defines, and reviews essential consultation skills;
- describes foundational consultation constructs, theories, and models that form the basis for recognizing and addressing typical (and some atypical) consulting issues, conceptualizing consultant and consultee issues and concerns, and fully engaging in the provision of professional consultation;
- reviews and provides a clear description and analysis of the relevant historical and contemporary research supporting the practice of professional consultation by and among professional counselors;
- highlights the need for the employment of measures of accountability; and
- provides a brief discussion of the growing influence of coaching within the business mental health disciplines and briefly discusses coaching and its differences from counseling and consulting.

Table AP-1 2009 CACREP Standards Related to Consultation

Chapter(s) in Book	CACREP Standard
PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE:	
1, 2	1.b. professional roles, functions, and relationships with other human service providers, including strategies for interagency/interorganization collaboration and communications
7	1.j. ethical standards of professional organizations and credentialing bodies and applications of ethical and legal consideration in professional counseling
HELPING RELATIONSHIPS:	
3	5.b. counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes
3, 4	5.c. essential interviewing and counseling skills
All	5.f. a general framework for understanding and practicing consultation
8	5.g. crisis intervention and suicide prevention models, including the use of psychological first aid strategies
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY	
All	2.d. individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including multicultural considerations
CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING	
8	C.1 describes the principles of mental health, including prevention, intervention, <i>consultation</i> , education, and advocacy, as well as the operation of programs and networks that promote mental health in a multicultural society
SCHOOL COUNSELING	
9	M.4. understands systems theories, models, and processes of consultation in school system settings
CAREER COUNSELING	
10	C.2 career development program planning, organization, implementation, administration, and evaluation

### Rationale/The Need

Becoming a mental health professional is a developmental process involving a personal and professional awareness of the simplicity and complexity of counseling's relational and procedural elements. So too is the development of the knowledge base and skill sets implicit to the role of practice of consultation. In order to address these

fundamental elements of consultation within the counseling professional, this text utilizes the mission and standards set forth by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP). In doing so, the text is designed to ensure that students and counseling practitioners alike remain attuned to the requisite knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to encourage mastery of the practice of consultation and heighten their identity as a professional consultant. This process also fosters the development of more complex cognitive structures that facilitate the critical analysis and reflectivity necessary to succeed in consulting environments where complex inter- and intrapersonal dynamics and organizational and systemic demands are the norm. Counselors acting as consultants should expect to encounter and be able to adapt to the concerns and needs of an increasingly diverse range of mental health and allied health professionals. Although grounded in the ethical, legal, and CACREP standards of the counseling profession, this text will also work to integrate appropriate consultation models, competencies, and best practices of other mental health, allied health, and even business models. The ultimate goal of this addition is to provide the counselor as consultant with the broadest knowledge base on consulting in order to ensure that they can compete in an increasingly diverse marketplace. Thus, counselors acting in the role of consultant are well equipped to organize information and make meaning of experiences in a more comprehensive, integrated, and differentiated manner, thereby broadening their potential to effect positive change in a variety of settings.

Current textbooks used by counselor training programs consistently provide the content recognized as fundamental to professional practice. These texts consistently present the *fundamentals* of the consultation process. While these texts provide a well-thought-out approach to a specific set of skills, there remains a need to orient counselors-in-training (and current practitioners) to the counselor as consultant in relation to the more contemporary counseling paradigms of wellness and professional identity, along with the more traditional roles and responsibilities counselors have encountered in the consulting role.

To that end, the text *Counselor as Consultant* was conceptualized as a means to order and explore the traditional understanding of counselor as consultant paradigm while advocating the need to remain attuned to the challenges counselors may encounter as they adopt the role of consultant as a member of the counseling profession in the 21st century. To meet this challenge, *Counselor as Consultant* is designed as an evidence-based text that seeks to blend the historical importance and influence of the constructs, models, and theories related to the counselor as consultant with the more contemporary aspects of this role within the context of current CACREP standards and the dynamic landscape of the counseling profession. Inherent within the text will be analysis, activities, case studies, reflective exercises, and author contributions organized around the central goal of enhancing the reader's level of critical thinking, knowledge base, identity as a professional counselor, and self-awareness surrounding the roles and responsibilities of a consultant.