Professional Competence and Training

Chapter 8
Psychology 475
Professional Ethics in Addictions Counseling

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Perspectives on Competence

- One way to develop or upgrade your skills is to work with professionals who have more experience than you do.

You can learn new skills by:

- Attending conferences
- Taking additional courses in areas you do not know well

More ways to learn new skills:

- Taking classes in theories you're not necessarily drawn to
- Participate in workshops that combine didactic work with supervised practice

Making Referrals

- Counselors should know their own competence.

Refer When

- Working with a client is beyond your professional training
- Personal factors would interfere with a productive working relationship
- Value conflicts
Professional Licensing and Credentialing

- Registry: a voluntary listing of individuals who use a title or provide service.

Although licensing and certification differ in their purposes, they have some common features. Both require:

- Specific requirements in terms of education and training and acceptance from practicing professionals
- Testing to determine which applicants have met the standards and deserve to be granted a credential.

Certification and Licensure Defined

- Certification: a voluntary attempt by a group to promote a professional identity.
- Licensure: statutes determine and govern professional practice.

Certification and Licensure continued

- Licensure and Certification assure the public that counselors have completed minimal educational programs, and have had supervised training.

Arguments for and Against Professional Licensing and Credentialing

In Favor of

- The public is protected by setting minimum standards of service and holding professionals accountable if they do not measure up.
- The public is protected from its ignorance about services that should be provided by professional.
More in Favor of

• Because insurance will pay for licensed professionals, more people should be able to get services.

• Licensing allows the profession to define what it will and will not due.

Against it

• Licensing is designed to create and preserve a “union shop”.

• It works as a self serving measure that creates monopolistic helping professions.

More against it

• Carl Rogers – as soon as criteria is set up for certification, the profession inevitably becomes frozen in a past image. Professionals build up a rigid bureaucracy.

Continuing Education and Demonstration of Competence

• Continuing education helps professionals stay on top of new developments in their area and keep their skills sharp.

Counselors can do this by:

• Reading books and journals

• Attending workshops and conventions

• Giving presentations

More things counselors can do:

• Participate in peer consultation groups

• Continue to grow professionally and personally
Peer Review: an organized system by which practitioners within a profession assess one another's services.

Peer-consultation groups: fosters the development of skills, conceptual growth, participation, instructive feedback, and self-monitor.