

CHAPTER 2

The Counselor as a Person and as a Professional

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

- 2-1 Appreciate the role of counselor self-awareness in ethical practice.
- 2-2 Provide a rationale for the importance of personal therapy for counselors.
- 2-3 Clarify how countertransference can be an ethical concern.
- 2-4 View client dependence as a potential ethical problem.
- 2-5 Describe the main sources of stress that counselors must address.
- 2-6 Understand how stress can lead to therapist impairment.
- 2-7 Develop a personal strategy for ongoing self-care.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Introduction

Self-Awareness and the Influence of the Therapist's Personality and Needs

 Motivations for Becoming a Counselor

 Personal Problems and Conflicts

Personal Therapy for Counselors

 Experiential Learning Toward Self-Understanding

 Personal Therapy During Training

 Ongoing Therapy for Practitioners

Transference and Countertransference

 Transference: The "Unreal" Relationship in Therapy

 Countertransference: Ethical Implications

 Countertransference: Clinical Implications

Client Dependence

 Delaying Termination as a Form of Client Dependence

Stress in the Counseling Profession

 The Hazards of Helping

 Stress Caused by Being Overly Responsible

 Sources of Stress

Counselor Burnout and Impairment

Maintaining Vitality Through Self-Care

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

It is essential that students be aware of their motivations for choosing the helping professions as a career, in part because their motivations for being a helper are related to the development of an ethical sense. Although many personal needs can be met through helping others, it is crucial that these needs not be met at the expense of the client. Those who make a lifetime commitment to helping others have a responsibility to be clear about what they are getting

from their work and how their personal characteristics play a vital role in their ability to make appropriate ethical decisions.

Chapter 2 covers the role of the counselor as a person in the therapeutic relationship. A clinician's beliefs, values, personal attributes, level of personal functioning, and ways of living inevitably influence the way he or she carries out a professional role, which is central to ethical practice. Other topics covered include self-awareness, influence of the therapist's personality and needs, personal therapy for counselor trainees, ethical dimensions in dealing with transference and countertransference reactions, client dependence, managing stress in the helping professions, self-care, and the impaired practitioner.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

1. Think of the type of client you might have the most difficulty working with. Then become this client in a role play with one other student. Have your partner attempt to counsel you. After you have had a chance to be the client, reverse roles and you become the counselor.
2. In small groups discuss any possible experiences you have had with burnout, what contributed to it, and what helped you to address this condition. Discuss some possible causes of professional burnout, and brainstorm ways of preventing or minimizing it.
3. Reflect on the benefits of seeking personal therapy as a helper. If you were to seek therapy at this point in time, what issues or concerns would be most pressing for you to explore? Are there particular family-of-origin issues that might affect your work with clients that you need to address in therapy?
4. Make a realistic appraisal of how well you take care of yourself in all areas of your life. Would you benefit from making changes in your diet/nutrition, exercise regime, sleep, or work–leisure balance? To what extent do you take time to attend to the dimensions of your life that are important to you? Identify areas that need improvement and create a self-care plan. If you choose, share your plan with another person. If you implement your plan early in the semester, revisit this topic once you have practiced your self-care plan. In dyads or small groups, discuss the progress you made in meeting your self-care goals. Be sure to address the challenges you encountered, as well as your successes.
 - What are some of the barriers that prevent you from practicing self-care?
 - Who might you be able to ask for support in reaching your self-care goals?
 - If time, money, or excessive responsibilities keep you from self-care, how might you address these issues?
5. In video role play 2, *Dealing With Anger: A Protective Brother*, the client (Richard) reports that his sister is dating an Asian man. Richard is angry and says that he is not going to let that happen. He adds that his sister is not going to mess with his family like that. The counselor (Nadine) asks Richard if he thinks his sister should live to make him happy. He says, "My sister is going to do what I say and that's just it!"

This vignette shows how a counselor's own unfinished personal issues can get in the way of counseling a client who is expressing anger. Identify and discuss the ethical issues you see played out in this vignette. Reenact the role play by having several students take the role of counselor to show alternative perspectives.

6. Video role play 5, *Giving Advice: Take Charge*, illustrates how a counselor's lack of

self-awareness can be problematic. In this situation, the counselor (Nadine) is giving an abundance of advice, which may be a countertransference issues on her part. She is telling her client (John) how he needs to take charge and decide what is the right way to treat his children. When counselors focus on telling clients what they should be doing, this might be a clue to the counselor's unresolved issues. Role-play how you might deal with John's concerns about how he is making decisions about treating his children. Show how you might deal with a client who asks for your advice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Ask the students to complete the self-inventory at the beginning of the chapter. Discuss some of the statements with which they strongly agree and strongly disagree.
2. Explore your motivations for wanting to pursue a career as a helper. Discuss the following question: What personal needs do you expect to meet through your professional work?
3. Discuss the following questions: To what degree might your personal needs get in the way of your work with clients? How can you recognize and meet your needs without having them interfere with your work with others?

KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

burnout: A state of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual exhaustion characterized by feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

countertransference: Projections by therapists that distort the way they perceive and react to a client. It is a therapist's unconscious emotional response to a client that may interfere with objectivity.

empathy balance: Involves the therapist being able to enter the client's world without getting lost in that world.

empathy fatigue: Shares similarities with other fatigue syndromes such as compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, vicarious traumatization, and burnout. Common to professionals who treat survivors of stressful and traumatic events; who treat people with mood, anxiety, and stress-related disorders; and who work in vocational settings with people with mental and physical disabilities.

experiential learning: Focuses on giving students opportunities to share their values, life experiences, and personal concerns in a group setting.

impairment: The presence of a chronic illness or severe psychological depletion that is likely to prevent a professional from being able to deliver effective services and results in consistently functioning below acceptable practice standards.

self-care: Paying attention to nurturing the body, mind, and spirit. Taking steps to promote one's wellness on all levels.

self-compassion: Involves developing attitudes of caring, being nonjudgmental, being accepting, and being kind to ourselves. Self-compassion can enhance counselor well-being, counselor effectiveness in the workplace, and therapeutic relationships with clients.

stress: An event or a series of events leading strain, which often result in physical and psychological health problems.

therapeutic lifestyle changes: Self-care strategies to promote wellness, such as exercise, nutrition and diet, time in nature, relationships, recreation, relaxation, stress management, religious or spiritual involvement, and service to others.

transference: Clients' unconscious shifting to the therapists of feelings, attitudes, and fantasies, both positive and negative, that they have had toward significant people in their life.

LO/STANDARDS CORRELATION CHART

A-head	LO	Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4
Self-Awareness and the Influence of the Therapist's Personality and Needs	2-1 Appreciate the role of counselor self-awareness in ethical practice	CACREP 1k - Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice - Strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice.	EPAS Competency 1b - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior - Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.	NOHS STANDARD 35 - Responsibility to Self - Human service professionals strive to develop and maintain healthy personal growth to ensure that they are capable of giving optimal services to clients. When they find that they are physically, emotionally, psychologically, or otherwise not able to offer such services, they identify alternative services for clients.	CSHSE A10b - Self-Development. Standard 20: The program shall provide experiences and support to enable students to develop awareness of their own values, personalities, reaction patterns, interpersonal styles, and limitations - Clarification of personal and professional values.
Personal Therapy for Counselors	2-2 Provide a rationale for the importance of personal therapy for counselors	CACREP1l - Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice - Self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role.	EPAS Competency 1b - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior - Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism	NOHS STANDARD 35 - Responsibility to Self - Human service professionals strive to develop and maintain healthy personal growth to ensure that they are	CSHSE A10d - Self-Development. Standard 20: The program shall provide experiences and support to enable students to develop awareness of their own values, personalities,

			m in practice situations.	capable of giving optimal services to clients. When they find that they are physically, emotionally, psychologically , or otherwise not able to offer such services, they identify alternative services for clients.	reaction patterns, interpersonal styles, and limitations - Strategies for self-care.
Transference and Countertransference	2-3 Clarify how countertransference can be an ethical concern	CACREP2e - Social and Cultural Diversity - The effects of power and privilege for counselors and clients.	EPAS Competency1 b - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior - Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.	NOHS STANDARD 7 - Responsibility to Clients - Human service professionals ensure that their values or biases are not imposed upon their clients.	CSHSE A10a - Self-Development. Standard 20: The program shall provide experiences and support to enable students to develop awareness of their own values, personalities, reaction patterns, interpersonal styles, and limitations - Conscious use of self.
Client Dependence	2-4 View client dependence as a potential ethical problem	CACREP5f - Counseling and Helping Relationships - Counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence the counseling process.	EPAS Competency1a - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior - Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws	NOHS STANDARD 7 - Responsibility to Clients - Human service professionals ensure that their values or biases are not imposed upon their clients.	CSHSE A9g - Client-Related Values and Attitudes. Standard 19: The curriculum shall incorporate human services values and attitudes and promote understanding

			and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context.		of human services ethics and their application in practice - Appropriate professional boundaries.
Stress in the Counseling Profession	2-5 Describe the main sources of stress that counselors must address	CACREP1k - Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice - Strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice.	EPAS Competency1 b - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior - Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.	NOHS STANDARD 35 - Responsibility to Self - Human service professionals strive to develop and maintain healthy personal growth to ensure that they are capable of giving optimal services to clients. When they find that they are physically, emotionally, psychologically , or otherwise not able to offer such services, they identify alternative services for clients.	CSHSE A10d - Self-Development. Standard 20: The program shall provide experiences and support to enable students to develop awareness of their own values, personalities, reaction patterns, interpersonal styles, and limitations - Strategies for self-care.
Counselor Burnout and Impairment	2-6 Understand how stress can lead to therapist impairment	CACREP1k - Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice - Strategies for	EPAS Competency1 b - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior - Use	NOHS STANDARD 35 - Responsibility to Self - Human service professionals	CSHSE A10d - Self-Development. Standard 20: The program shall provide experiences

		personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice.	reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.	strive to develop and maintain healthy personal growth to ensure that they are capable of giving optimal services to clients. When they find that they are physically, emotionally, psychologically, or otherwise not able to offer such services, they identify alternative services for clients.	and support to enable students to develop awareness of their own values, personalities, reaction patterns, interpersonal styles, and limitations - Strategies for self-care.
Maintaining Vitality Through Self-Care	2-7 Develop a personal strategy for ongoing self-care	CACREP1I - Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice - Self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role.	EPAS Competency1 b - Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior - Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations.	NOHS STANDARD 36 – Responsibility to Self - Human service professionals hold a commitment to lifelong learning and continually advance their knowledge and skills to serve clients more effectively.	CSHSE A10d - Self-Development. Standard 20: The program shall provide experiences and support to enable students to develop awareness of their own values, personalities, reaction patterns, interpersonal styles, and limitations - Strategies for self-care.