The Counseling Process

The counseling process is a continuous, cyclical series of interactions in which the counselor and client collaboratively set goals, formulate and implement action plans, and assess progress toward the goal(s). Throughout the process, new information is integrated, the counselor-client relationship is developed, and progress toward counseling goals is reassessed.

The counselor must develop an overall awareness of the entire counseling process across a number of interviews. In consultation with the supervisor, students will be asked to approach the model of counseling process presented here by concentrating on particular points in the model during each semester, and relating these to the overall process of the counseling.

The counseling process model presented below represents a series of overall goals and expectations for the counselor as he/she progresses through a series of interviews with a client.

1. Counselor structures the initial interview, helps the client to define problem(s), and develops initial hypotheses. This format is continually revisited to some extent in each interview.

2. Counselor demonstrates care and strives to develop a trusting, collaborative relationship with the client.

3. Counselor tests hypotheses and develops an interaction between problem definition and information elicited from client.

4. Counselor develops a case conceptualization as a helpful tool in the counseling process. This will include a summary of the counselor’s view of the problem, taking into consideration the common themes and what ties it all together. This is a synthesis of the above data that may illuminate the problem and guide the counseling plan.

5. Counselor and client seek new information which may include additional input from testing, use of campus and community resources, exploring career information and opportunities, and accessing college bulletins and psychoeducational materials.

6. Counselor and client make decisions about desired behavior change.

7. Counselor helps client to set goals and behavioral objectives for behavior change.

8. Counselor assists client in developing plan of action to resolve problem and reach objectives. Counselor develops a Counseling Plan in collaboration with the client. This will include a plan to be followed in the course of counseling to address the presenting problems. This plan is consistent with the conceptualization of the problem and the theoretical orientation of the counselor.
9. Counselor is aware of and communicates her/his own expectations of the counseling process to the client.

10. Counselor is able to appropriately terminate an individual interview, including a summary of important information gathered and agreed upon action plan for client.