



Idaho Board of Alcohol/Drug Counselor Certification, INC.

12 Core Functions

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Twelve Core Functions

The Twelve Core Functions of an alcohol/drug abuse counselor are used as standards for counselor competency.

I. Screening: The process by which the client is determined appropriate and eligible for admission to a particular program.

Global Criteria

- 1) Evaluate psychological, social, and physiological signs and symptoms of alcohol/drug use and abuse.
- 2) Determine the client's appropriateness for admission or referral.
- 3) Determine the client's eligibility for admission or referral.
- 4) Identify any coexisting conditions (medical, psychiatric, physical, etc.) that indicate need for additional professional assessment and/or services.
- 5) Adhere to applicable laws, regulations and agency policies governing alcohol and drug abuse services.

EXPLANATION

This function requires that the counselor consider a variety of factors before deciding whether or not to admit the potential client for treatment.

It is imperative that the counselor uses appropriate diagnostic criteria to determine whether the applicant's alcohol and drug use constitutes abuse. All counselors must be able to describe the criteria they use and demonstrate their competence by presenting specific examples of how the use of alcohol and drugs has become dysfunctional for a particular client.

The determination of a particular client's appropriateness for a program requires the counselor's judgment and skill and is influenced by the program's environment and modality (i.e., inpatient, outpatient, residential, pharmacotherapy, detoxification, or daycare). Important factors include the nature of the substance abuse, the physical condition of the client, the psychological functioning of the client, outside supports/resources, previous treatment efforts, motivation, and philosophy of the program.

The eligibility criteria are generally determined by the focus, target population and funding requirements of the counselor's program or agency. Many of the criteria are easily ascertained. These may include the client's age, gender, place of residence, legal status, veteran status, income level and the referral source. Allusion to following agency policy is a minimally acceptable statement.

If the applicant is found ineligible or inappropriate for this program, the counselor should be able to suggest an alternative.

II. Intake: The administrative and initial assessment procedures for admission to the program.

Global Criteria

- 1) Complete required documents for admission to the program.
- 2) Complete required documents for program eligibility and appropriateness.
- 3) Obtain appropriately signed consent when soliciting from or providing information to outside sources to protect client confidentiality and rights.

EXPLANATION

The intake usually becomes an extension of the screening when the decision to admit is formally made and documented. Much of the intake process includes the completion of various forms. Typically, the client and counselor fill out an admission or intake sheet, document the initial assessment, complete appropriate release of information, collect financial data, sign consent for treatment, and assign the primary counselor.

III. Orientation: Describing to the client the following: general nature and goals of the program; rules governing client conduct and infractions that can lead to disciplinary action or discharge from the program; in a non-residential program, the hours during which services are available; treatment cost to be home by the client, if any; and client rights.

Global Criteria

- 1) Provide an overview to the client by describing program goals and objectives for client care.
- 2) Provide an overview to the client by describing program rules, and client obligations and rights.
- 3) Provide an overview to the client of program operations.

EXPLANATION

Orientation may be provided before, during and/or after the client's screening and intake. It can be conducted in an individual, group, or family context. Portions of the orientation may include other personnel for certain specific aspects of the treatment, such as medication.

IV. Assessment: The procedures by which a counselor/program identifies and evaluates an individual's strengths, weaknesses, problems and needs for the development of a treatment plan.

Global Criteria

- 1) Gather relevant history from client including but not limited to alcohol and drug abuse, using appropriate interview techniques.
- 2) Identify methods and procedures for obtaining corroborative information from significant secondary sources regarding client's alcohol and drug abuse and psycho-social history.
- 3) Identify appropriate assessment tools.
- 4) Explain to the client the rationale for the use of assessment techniques in order to facilitate understanding.
- 5) Develop a diagnostic evaluation of the client's substance abuse and any coexisting conditions based on the results of all assessments in order to provide an integrated approach to treatment. Planning must be based on the client's strengths, weaknesses, and identified problems and needs.

EXPLANATION

Although assessment is a continuing process, it is generally emphasized early in treatment. It usually results from a combination of focused interviews, testing and/or record reviews.

The counselor evaluates major life areas (i.e. physical health, vocation development, social adaptation, legal involvement and psychological functioning) and assesses the extent to which alcohol and drug use has interfered with the client's functioning in each of these areas. The result of this assessment should suggest the focus of treatment.

V. Treatment Planning: Process by which the counselor and the client identify and rank problems needing resolution; establish agreed upon immediate and long-term goals; and decide upon a treatment process and the resources to be utilized.

Global Criteria

- 1) Explain assessment results to client in an understandable manner.
- 2) Identify and rank problems based on individual client needs in the written treatment plan

- 3) Formulate agreed upon immediate and long-term goals using behavioral terms in the written treatment plan.
- 4) Identify the treatment methods and resources to be utilized as appropriate for the individual client.

EXPLANATION

The treatment contract is based on the assessment and is a product of negotiation between the client and the counselor to assure that the plan is tailored to the individual's needs. The language of the problem, goal, and strategy statements should be specific, intelligible to the client and expressed in behavioral terms. The statement of the problem must concisely elaborate on the client's needs previously identified. The goal statements refer specifically to the identified problem and may include a set of objectives ultimately intended to resolve or mitigate the problem. The goals must be expressed in behavioral terms in order for the counselor and client to determine progress in treatment. (Both immediate and long-term goals should be established.) The plan or strategy is a specific activity that links the problem with the goal. It describes the services, who will perform them, when they will be provided, and at what frequency. Treatment planning is a dynamic process and the contracts must be regularly reviewed and modified as appropriate.

VI. Counseling (individual, group, and significant others): The utilization of special skills to assist individuals, families or groups in achieving objectives through exploration of a problem and its ramifications; examination of attitudes and feelings; consideration of alternative solutions; and decision-making.

Global Criteria

- 1) Select the counseling theory or theories which apply.
- 2) Apply technique(s) to assist the client, group, and/or family in exploring problems and ramifications.
- 3) Apply technique(s) to assist the client, group, and/or family in examining the client's behavior, attitudes, and/or feelings if appropriate in the treatment setting.
- 4) Individualize counseling in accordance with cultural, gender, and lifestyle differences.
- 5) Interact with the client in an appropriate therapeutic manner.
- 6) Elicit solutions and decisions from the client.
- 7) Implement the treatment plan.

EXPLANATION

Counseling is a relationship in which the counselor helps the client mobilize resources to resolve his or her problem and/or modify attitudes and values. The counselor must be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of various counseling approaches. These methods may include: Reality Therapy, Transactional Analysis, Strategic Family Therapy, Client Centered Therapy, etc.

Furthermore, the counselor must be able to explain the rationale for using a specific approach for the particular client. For example, a behavioral approach might be suggested for clients who are resistant and manipulative or have difficulty anticipating consequences and regulating impulses. On the other hand, a cognitive approach may be appropriate for a client who is depressed, yet insightful and articulate.

Also, the counselor should explain his or her rationale for choosing a counseling approach in an individual, group, or significant other context. Finally, the counselor should be able to explain why a counseling approach or context changed during treatment.

VII. Case Management: Activities which bring services, agencies, resource, or people together within a planned framework of action toward the achievement of established goals. It may involve liaison activities and collateral contacts.

Global Criteria

- 1) Coordinate services for client care.
- 2) Explain the rationale of case management activities to the client.

EXPLANATION

Case management is the coordination of a multiple service plan. Case management decisions must be explained to the client. By the time many alcohol and drug abusers enter treatment they tend to manifest dysfunction in a variety of areas. For example, a heroin addict may have hepatitis, lack job skills and have a pending criminal charge. In this case, the counselor might monitor his medical treatment, make a referral to a vocational rehabilitation program and communicate with representatives of the criminal justice system.

The client may also be receiving other treatment services such as family therapy and pharmacotherapy, within the same agency. These activities must be integrated into the treatment plan and communication must be maintained with the appropriate personnel.

VIII. Crisis Intervention: Those services which respond to an alcohol and/or other drug abuser's needs during acute emotional and/or physical distress.

Global Criteria

- 1) Recognize the elements of the client crisis.
- 2) Implement an immediate course of action appropriate to the crisis.
- 3) Enhance overall treatment by utilizing crisis events.

EXPLANATION

A crisis is a decisive, crucial event in the course of treatment that threatens to compromise or destroy the rehabilitation effort. These crises may be directly related to alcohol or drug use (i.e., overdose or relapse) or indirectly related. That latter might include the death of a significant other, separation/divorce, arrest, suicide gestures, and a psychotic episode or outside pressure to terminate treatment. If no specific crisis is presented in the Written Case, rely on and describe a past experience with a client. Describe the overall picture-before, during, and after the crisis.

It is imperative that the counselor be able to identify the crises when they surface, attempt to mitigate or resolve the immediate problem and use negative events to enhance the treatment efforts, if possible.

IX. Client Education: Provision of information to individuals and groups concerning alcohol and drug abuse and the available services and resources.

Global Criteria

- 1) Present relevant alcohol and drug use/abuse information to the client through formal and/or informal processes.
- 2) Present information about available alcohol and drug services and resources.

EXPLANATION

Client education is provided in a variety of ways. In certain inpatient and residential programs, for example, a sequence of formal classes may be conducted using a didactic format with reading materials and films. On the other hand, an outpatient counselor may provide relevant information to the client individually or informally. In addition to alcohol and drug information, client education may include a description of self-help groups and other resources that are available to the clients and their families. The applicant must be competent in providing specific examples of the type of education provided to the client and the relevance to the case.

X. Referral: Identifying the needs of a client that cannot be met by the counselor or agency and assisting the client to utilize the support systems and community resources available.

Global Criteria

- 1) Identify need(s) and/or problem(s) that the agency and/or counselor cannot meet.
- 2) Explain the rationale for the referral to the client.
- 3) Match client needs and/or problems to appropriate resources.
- 4) Adhere to applicable laws, regulations and agency policies governing procedures related to the protection of the client's confidentiality.
- 5) Assist the client in utilizing the support systems and community resources available.

EXPLANATION

In order to be competent in this function, the counselor must be familiar with community resources, both alcohol and drug, as well as others, and should be aware of the limitations of each service and the limitations might adversely impact the client. In addition, the counselor must be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of the referral process, including confidentiality requirements and outcomes of the referral.

Referral is obviously closely related to case management when integrated into the initial and on-going treatment plan. It also includes, however, aftercare or discharge planning referrals that take into account the continuum of care.

XI. Report and Record Keeping: Charting the results of the assessment and treatment plan, writing reports, progress notes, discharge summaries and other client-related data.

Global Criteria

- 1) Prepare reports and relevant records integrated available information to facilitate the continuum of care.
- 2) Chart pertinent ongoing information pertaining to the client.
- 3) Utilize relevant information from written documents for client care.

EXPLANATION

The report and record keeping function is important. It benefits the counselor by documenting the client's progress in achieving his or her goals. It facilitates adequate communication between co-workers. It assists the counselor's supervisor in providing timely feedback. It is valuable to other programs that may provide services to the client at a later date. It can enhance the accountability of the program

to its licensing/funding sources. Ultimately, if performed properly, it enhances the client's entire treatment experience. The applicant must prove personal action in regard to the report and record keeping function.

XII. Consultation with Other Professionals in Regard to Client Treatment/Services: Relating with in-house staff or outside professionals to assure comprehensive, quality care for the client.

Global Criteria

- 1) Recognize issues that are beyond the counselor's base of knowledge and/or skill.
- 2) Consult with appropriate resources to ensure the provision of effective treatment services.
- 3) Adhere to applicable laws, regulations and agency policies governing the disclosure of client-identifying data.
- 4) Explain the rationale for the consultation to the client, if appropriate.

EXPLANATION

Consultations are meetings for discussion, decision-making and planning. The most common consultation is the regular in-house staffing in which client cases are reviewed with other members of the treatment team. Consultations may also be conducted in individual sessions with the supervisor, other counselors, psychologists, physicians, probation officers, and other service providers connected to the client's case.