Guidelines for Completing the Counseling and Conceptualization Competency (CCC)
Bloomsburg University
Master of Education in Counseling Program

The purpose of this interview is to arrive at an understanding of the individual’s presenting problem or concern through an assessment of current life situation, developmental processes, family background, behavioral characteristics, assets, and vulnerabilities, as well as manifest behavior and responsiveness in the initial interview situation. If you are a student who is re-taking the CCC it is strongly recommended that you meet with your faculty supervisor to clarify the expectations and criteria for this competency evaluation. It is your responsibility to contact your faculty supervisor about this process.

1. Preparing for the Counseling and Conceptualization Competency (CCC)

   A. Obtain permission from a child, adolescent or adult who is capable of a relatively coherent verbal interview. Remember if you are going to interview a child or adolescent under the age of 18, you must obtain a parent’s written consent and verbal assent from the child or adolescent you are taping. If you have difficulty finding a suitable client, discuss this problem with your faculty supervisor.

   B. Secure a place for the interview, and make sure your recording equipment records the interview audibly. Test your equipment before your client arrives. The audio or video tape of the interview should be clearly audible. A typed, complete transcript of the session must accompany the tape. Each interchange should be clearly labeled (e.g., S1 (student), I1 (Interviewer), C2, I2). You do not need to edit the transcript or the tape. You are responsible for the accuracy of the transcript. The transcript should be proof-read against the tape before submitting it to the evaluator.

Give yourself and your client time to become comfortable with the taping. It is suggested that you get into a routine of taping your clients at the beginning of semester and consistently tape through your practicum training. You will be required to periodically present your taped sessions during individual and group supervision and you will need a taped session for your CCC.

   C. While you may be currently receiving supervision on the case you present for the CCC, you must not be supervised on the particular hour you submit for the evaluation by your individual or group supervisor. The presentation should offer a view of your independent capacity to discuss and analyze a counseling session/interview.

2. Conducting the Interview

   A. You are expected to explore the presenting problem or concern and its precipitating factors in some depth. How you choose to do so should be based on your professional judgment. The type of information you inquire about should be related, again, to your on-going assessment of areas which appear most significant to understand. You are not
expected to rigidly develop information based on the format, but to selectively pursue those areas you deem most relevant to your view of the presenting problem or concern of the client.

B. The interview/counseling session is to last between 30 to 50 minutes. Longer interviews (for verbose adolescents and adults) and shorter interviews (for children) will be allowed, if cleared with your faculty supervisor prior to submission of the CCC.

3. Conceptualization Report Format

Please disguise the individual and/or institutional setting presented in the transcript and report. This means all proper names should be omitted. This request is to protect the confidentiality of the client.

Please be sure to clarify what are your observations and what is the client’s commentary. We want to know how well you represent the interviewee’s view of their problems or concerns, and distinguish that clearly from your own observation of the interviewee. Try not to confuse the two perspectives.

The report should be selective and succinct. The length of the report is 7 to 9 pages to cover sections I to VII. You should also take 2 to 3 pages to do the self-critique listed in section VIII. The total length of the report should be 9 to 12 pages. You should, therefore, select the most significant data to include and analyze in your report rather than feel compelled to include all the data.

Review the transcript several times to make sure you include the most significant material in your report and your case formulation. It is suggested that you make 2 or 3 drafts well in advance of the due date to maximize your observations and insights.

Provide a professional report written in third person style. Specifically, you should refer to yourself as the counselor or interviewer (as opposed to saying “I” or “me”). Please include the following information in your conceptualization report. It is suggested that you follow the format provided below for including material in the report.

I. Identifying Information- Include interviewee’s sex, age, social class, race, religion, grade or education level, current living situation, and marital status and occupation (for adults).

II. Presenting Appearance – Description of salient aspects of physical appearance and mannerisms, as well as observations of significant interactions with the interviewer/counselor. Specify significant behavioral, affective, interactional observations that help you in assessing the interviewee’s problems and strengths.

III. Presenting Problem or Concern – Please list the overt reason(s) the interviewee is seeking help or is in counseling. This section should be a direct quote from the student (for example, “I am here because I always get into fights with other kids”).
This section should be no more than one of two direct quotes from the student about their perception of why they are having a counseling session with you.

IV. **Precipitating Factors and History of the Problem** – Discuss events and/or life changes that accompanied appearance of psychological distress, or appear associated with such distress. Discuss the development and course of problems or concerns since the client first noticed their appearance. Discuss any previous efforts at resolution and apparent consequences. For students interviewing children and adolescents from school sites, information for this section of the report may also be gained through discussions with the child’s parents and teachers. Be certain to include the child’s perspective on these issues and note when information provided is supplied by a source other than the child.

V. **History of the Person** - The areas below are suggested. Areas of information developed for this conceptualization will depend on the type of problem or concern addressed in the session and the interviewer’s rationale for the interview. In short, rigid questioning about each area is neither expected nor desirable in a 30 to 50 minute counseling session.

- **Developmental History** - Developmental milestones and attendant stresses (e.g. early separations from family, adolescent stresses, young adult crises, etc.).

- **Family History** - This section may be integrated with developmental history. You may include or examine family or origin constellation, ages, ethnic-racial, class and religious backgrounds, description of parents, siblings, and quality of relationships with such figures at critical times during childhood, adolescence and adulthood; major losses, changes, traumas within family history, psychological or physical disturbances in family members. Such problems should be mentioned here if not included fully in earlier sections.

- **School History** – Achievements, problems, aspirations, significant relationships with authority figures and teachers.

- **Peer Relations** – Significant peer relationships, difficulties, conflicts, etc.

- **Sexual History** – Early childhood memories, trauma or abuse, parental attitudes, reactions to physical changes at puberty, dating, sexual intercourse, masturbation, sexual orientation. Current attitudes toward sexuality, current sexual activity.

- **Work History** – Relations to work roles, work, authorities, and co-workers. Job history and changes, central work assets and liabilities

- **Medical History** – Past history of significant illness, injuries, and disabilities. Reactions to physical problems and family reactions to illnesses. Presence of substance abuse, use of prescription medication, cigarettes, over-the-counter medications, alcohol, etc.
VI. Formulation of Strengths and Weakness/Case Conceptualization

- You should identify strengths, resiliency factors and any buffers against stress that your client possesses.

- You should identify weakness which impact your client’s overall functioning.

And include ONE of the following:

- You should list a hypothetical/possible diagnosis for this client. Follow the format for offering a diagnosis as specified by the DSM-IV (e.g. give a diagnosis for the client on all five axes). In a few paragraphs, provide specific information from the interview and data you have collected that supports your conclusion.

OR

- Write a case conceptualization from a theoretical orientation of your choice. You should discuss the case from a particular orientation including the major components or underlying philosophy of the theory. This would include, for example, the terminology common to the theory and the basic premise(s) of the theory. For example, “Sue’s difficulties can be evaluated from a behavioral perspective. She cries (unconditioned response) every time she helps cut onions (unconditioned stimulus) in the school cafeteria. Presently she has developed a conditioned response to the knife even when there are no onions present. She cries (conditioned response) every time she sees a cafeteria knife (conditioned stimulus). The onion which naturally elicited a crying response became associated with or paired with the knife. Now Sue will cry when shown a cafeteria knife even when no onions are present.”

This need not be an extensive discussion; it should be two or three paragraphs in length and does not necessarily need to be referenced. You should be certain, however, that you understand and accurately represent the theoretical orientation you select. Points will be deducted for students who misrepresent theoretical information or do not accurately conceptualize the case based on the theoretical perspective selected for this part of the report. For this reason, some students may wish to site references in this section of the paper to ensure accurate conceptualization skills.

VII. Recommendations – The nature of the recommendations should flow from the needs of the client. This may include but is not limited to treatment goals in counseling, areas deserving some focus in counseling, incorporation of outside resources, steps or actions to be taken by parents, teachers, peers or the client.

VIII. Self-evaluation of the Interview/Counseling Session - Your ability to critically assess your performance here is important. It represents a significant factor in criteria for successful passage of this task. In this section of the report you may list your responses in the order/format provided or include the elements below in a paragraph format.
1. Justify the particular information that was developed in the interview or counseling session. In other words, critically assess the quality of the information that obtained. What areas might have needed more or less focus in this session? How well did you do in gathering the information to submit this report?

2. Critically assess the quality of the relationship developed between the interviewer and interviewee during the session. Discuss this in terms of:

   • Your strengths in the interview
   • Your weakness in the interview
   • The rapport that you developed with the client
   • Any problematic interchanges or difficulties you experienced with the student
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Evaluation Criteria for Written Professional Report

Student Name: ________________________________ Date: _______________________
Faculty Supervisor: ____________________________ Grade: Pass Revise Fail

Note: On all questions, 1 is the lowest or poorest rating and 5 represents the highest or best rating.

1. **Clarity of Presentation:** Indicates how well the interviewer presented the material in a formal written report. Was it well-written, and proof-read? Is the writing style clear? Does the report look professional?

   Poor → 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent
   (circle rating)

   Evaluators comments to support rating:

2. **Accurate inclusion of the most significant data from the interview:** Indicates how well the interviewer included data gained during the interview into the written report. Did the interviewer accurately represent the information gained during the interview into the report? Is relevant data from the interview omitted? Or distorted? Is irrelevant data included in the report?

   Omitted data, inaccurate → 1 2 3 4 5 Highly relevant and or irrelevant data included
   (circle rating)
   accurate data included

   Evaluators comments to support rating:
3. **Integration of data, formulations and recommendations into a comprehensive report:** This category indicates if the report is well-organized and cohesive. It demonstrates the interviewer’s ability to weave all the aspects of data gained in the interview into a flowing coherent document.

Poorly organized, → 1 2 3 4 5 Well-integrated and fragmented report (circle rating) coherent report

Evaluators comments to support rating:

4. **Self-Evaluation Skills:** Indicates the degree to which the interviewer can critically evaluate and assess their own counseling and conceptualization skills, noting both strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, evaluates the degree to which the interviewer can accurately assess their development of a relationship with a client, and understand any difficulties or problematic issues that may surface during counseling sessions.

Shallow and vague → 1 2 3 4 5 Clear and insightful self-evaluating capacity (circle rating) self-evaluating capacity

Evaluators comments to support rating:
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Evaluation Criteria for Interview/Counseling Session

Student Name: ________________________________ Date: _______________________
Faculty Supervisor: ____________________________ Grade: Pass Revise Fail

Note: On all questions, 1 is the lowest or poorest rating and 5 represents the highest or best rating.

1. **Structure of the Interview:** Interviewer/Counselor opens the interview with purpose, includes confidentiality statement and limitations. The interview manages transitions between data sets, interruptions, disclosures and time. The interviewer acknowledges any contextual/cultural issues. The interviewer forecasts the close of the interview, summarizes the interview and closes the interview. Specific actions are modified for children, adolescents, couples or families.

   Poorly-structured interview; \( \rightarrow \) 1 2 3 4 5 Well-structured interview; manages opening, transitions and/or closure well

   (circle rating)

   Evaluators comments to support rating:

2. **Forge a working alliance/counseling relationship:** Evidence of collaboration: cooperation, mutual coordinated effort by interviewer and interviewee towards accomplishment of interview purpose and an inquiry into the interviewee’s reaction to the interview. Specific actions are modified for children, adolescents, couples or families.

   Poor ability to develop counseling relationship \( \rightarrow \) 1 2 3 4 5 Strong ability to develop counseling relationship

   (circle rating)

   Evaluators comments to support rating:
3. **Facilitate interviewee participation and disclosure:** The interviewer helped the interviewee share information, express affect, take initiative in the interview and productively self-disclose; there is evidence the client is actively engaged in the session. Specific actions are modified for children, adolescents, couples or families.

   Poor ability to facilitate → 1 2 3 4 5 Strong ability to facilitate interviewee self-disclosure or active interviewee engagement

Evaluators comments to support rating:

4. **Data collection:** The interviewer collected data in the appropriate realms such as social relationships, family, school, occupation, physical and mental health. The interviewer included multiple sources (if applicable) and attempted to explore interviewee strengths and weaknesses. Specific actions are modified for children, adolescents, couples or families.

   Poor pursuit of data → 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent pursuit of data collection during the interview

Evaluators comments to support rating:
5. **Professional conduct:** Interviewer displayed respect for the interviewee and an openness to the interviewee. The interviewer recognized his or her own limitations and was self-aware. Interviewer was sensitive to issues of cultural and life-style diversity. Specific actions are modified for children, adolescents, couples or families.

Poor professional conduct; → 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent professional conduct;  
poor self-awareness; lacking (circle rating) good self-awareness & sensitivity to diversity issues  
sensitivity to diversity issues

Evaluators comments to support rating: