

# AARC Standards for Multicultural Assessments

## ADVOCACY

**Standard I.** Culturally competent professional counselors recognize the importance of social justice advocacy; they integrate understanding of the intersections of age, gender, ability, race, ethnic group, national origin, religion/spirituality, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, linguistic background, and other personal characteristics and identities in order to provide appropriate assessment and diagnostic techniques.

Professional counselors should:

- Recognize the impact of subtle biases on multicultural populations and the influence of these biases on the assessment process for themselves and others.
- Identify the impact of intersecting privileged and marginalized statuses on themselves and their clients in regard to the assessment process.
- Seek opportunities for learning by immersion in the social environments of multicultural populations in order to gain understanding of clients' worldview and the impact on the assessment process.
- Understand the influence of systemic and historical oppression on mental health and well-being and the way the experience of oppression impacts the assessment process for multicultural populations.
- Support the use of appropriate assessments that demonstrate sound psychometric properties with diverse and/or specific populations.
- Create awareness of the need for culturally responsive assessment practices with culturally diverse clients.
- Provide culturally competent practices and engage in social justice advocacy in all areas of counseling and assessment in a variety of settings, as guided by the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (2015).
- Work collaboratively with community leaders to understand and address the needs of diverse clients while providing opportunities to access services if needed.
- Address systemic barriers and consider how these barriers impact the interpretation, communication, and use of assessment results.
- Demonstrate awareness of potential biases in assessment instruments, and use procedures that comply with ethical guidelines when assessing diverse populations.
- Employ appropriate manual and electronic administration, scoring, interpretation, and use of assessment instruments relevant to the needs of clients.
- Ensure the proper use of psychological and assessment techniques by persons under their supervision and maintain confidentiality of data, while protecting against results being misused by others.

## SELECTION OF ASSESSMENTS: CONTENT AND PURPOSE, NORMING, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

**Standard II.** Culturally competent professional counselors select assessments and diagnostic techniques that are appropriate and effective for diverse client populations.

Professional counselors should:

- Understand and follow standard development procedures by utilizing accepted research methods when developing new instruments in order to ensure the technical quality of the content domains being evaluated.
- Demonstrate awareness of the technical aspects of assessments, including the importance of reliability, validity, measurement error, scores, and norms when selecting assessments.
- Evaluate representative samples of test questions or practice tests, directions, answer sheets, manuals, and score reports before selecting a test.
- Understand how to review information regarding the performance of test takers of diverse subgroups, using appropriate norming information to ensure adequate subgroup analyses.
- Understand how to select and utilize appropriate modified forms of tests for test takers of varying abilities, who require special accommodations.
- Select assessments that help identify needs, strengths, and resources for client empowerment and self-advocacy.
- Select instruments with which they are trained and are competent to use.
- Adhere to ethical standards for the administration, scoring, interpretation, or reporting procedures for a selected instrument and ensure that persons under their supervision are aware of these standards.
- Recognize the impact of intersecting cultural identities on test administration and interpretation, and place test results in proper perspective with other relevant contextual factors.
- Employ a variety of ethically appropriate assessment methods and sources, integrating information to create a comprehensive and accurate understanding of diverse clients and presenting concerns.

## **ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING OF ASSESSMENTS**

**Standard III.** Culturally competent professional counselors recognize challenges inherent in assessment of persons and seek to provide administration and scoring of assessment to clients respecting intersections of age, gender, ability, race, ethnic group, national origin, religion/spirituality, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, linguistic background, and other personal characteristics and identities.

Professional counselors should:

- Obtain, understand, and follow all established protocol for administering standardized test instruments to clients with diverse linguistic backgrounds, utilizing a competent translator (if needed) to address aspects of cultural identity throughout the assessment process, including informed consent and other procedural directives.
- Demonstrate familiarity with test materials and needed equipment, test question formatting, and procedures for responding to test questions.
- Understand the nature and importance of test security, copyright, and the ramifications of cheating, including maintaining confidentiality of scores with adequate security procedures.
- Know procedures, materials, and directions for scoring tests and/or monitoring the scoring process to ensure accuracy of test scores.

- Promptly report any errors in the scoring process, and communicate corrected results as soon as possible.
- Administer assessments only within the context of a defined professional relationship and utilize tests for their recommended purpose only.
- Obtain informed consent from clients regarding the nature and purpose of assessment methods to be used and ensure that the test taker has the opportunity to become familiar with the test question format.

## **INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

**Standard IV.** Culturally competent professional counselors acknowledge the importance of social justice advocacy in interpretation and communication of assessment results with diverse populations.

Professional counselors should:

- Understand the normative groups, technical information, benefits and limitations of assessments, and potential for bias in scoring and interpretation of assessment results.
- Provide a holistic appraisal of clients by creating a strong foundational evaluation that appreciates the influence of culture, background, individual characteristics, and intersecting identities.
- Understand the influence of culture, background, individual characteristics, and intersecting identities when designing and implementing interventions to achieve effective counseling outcomes.
- Recognize how the effects of stigma, oppression, discrimination, power, and status (privileged and marginalized) impact the interpretation and application of assessment results for culturally diverse clients.
- Recognize and collaborate with other professionals to eliminate biases, prejudices, and discriminatory contexts in conducting evaluations, interpretations, and providing interventions.
- Explain the nature and purpose of assessment and specific use of results in a way that is consistent with the developmental level of the client (or the client's legally authorized representative) and communicate relevant information in a way that empowers the client.
- Consider other factors present in the client's situation (e.g., disability, cultural factors, systemic or internalized oppression) before making any recommendations, when relevant.
- Avoid the use of data or results from assessments that are obsolete or outdated and make every effort to prevent the misuse of obsolete measures and assessment data by others.
- Release a client's identifiable assessment data only with the consent of the client, or their legal representative(s), or under court order, and only release the data to qualified professionals to interpret the data.

## **TRAINING IN THE USES OF ASSESSMENTS**

**Standard V.** Culturally competent professional counselors seek training and supervised experience to ensure they provide appropriate assessment and diagnostic techniques for diverse client populations.

Professional counselors should:

- Understand a test's characteristics and receive guidance from qualified professionals on the level of skills, knowledge, and training required to administer the test.
- Understand individual and group approaches to multicultural assessment.
- Receive training about the use of assessment data as a tool to develop client action plans and to make systemic changes that benefit individuals who are part of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.
- Collaborate with allies and policy makers to develop assessment practices that empower clients and educate the general public about culturally appropriate assessment of diverse individuals and groups.
- Engage in continuous education and training to increase knowledge of best practices in assessment and to enhance job performance.
- Seek required and recommended training in the use of traditional assessment and testing instruments, including technical aspects of the instruments.
- Understand cultural limitations of test instruments to better the welfare of diverse clients.

**Standard VI.** Counselor educators and supervisors of professional counselors promote culturally responsive assessment skill acquisition.

Counselor educators and supervisors should:

- Keep current with scholarship related to how to teach counselors-in-training how to best use assessment instruments in their work with multicultural populations.
- Be knowledgeable in the appropriate selection, use, evaluation, and interpretation of assessment instruments with multicultural populations and can appropriately communicate these results with diverse clients.

# AARC Standards for Career Counselor Assessment and Evaluation

**Standard I.** Counselors choose appropriate and relevant assessment strategies.

Career counselors should:

- Describe the nature and use of different types of formal and informal assessments, including questionnaires, checklists, interviews, inventories, tests, observations, surveys, and performance assessments, and work with individuals skilled in clinical assessment.
- Specify the types of information most readily obtained from different assessment approaches.
- Identify the type of information needed to assist the client and select the assessment strategy accordingly.
- Become familiar with resources for critically evaluating each type of assessment and can use those resources to choose appropriate assessment strategies.
- Be able to advise and assist organizations, such as educational institutions and governmental agencies, in choosing appropriate assessment strategies.
- Use only those assessments for which they are properly and professionally trained.

**Standard II.** Counselors are able to identify, access, and evaluate the most commonly used assessment instruments.

Career counselors should:

- Know which assessment areas are most commonly assessed in career counseling, such as ability, skills, personality, preference, work style, career thoughts and barriers, work values, and interests, including alternate formats.
- Know the factors by which assessment instruments should be evaluated, including developmental procedures, target audience, purpose, validity, utility, norms, reliability and measurement error, score reporting method, cost, and consequences of use.
- Obtain and evaluate information about the quality of career assessment instruments used.
- Use the highest quality instruments available with their students, clients, or customers.

**Standard III.** Counselors use appropriate techniques for administration and methods of scoring assessment instruments.

Career counselors should:

- Implement appropriate manual and electronic administration procedures.
- Follow strict standardized administration procedures as dictated by the user manual and resulting interpretation.
- Modify administration of assessments to accommodate individual differences consistent with publisher recommendations and current statements of professional practice.
- Provide consultation, information, and training to others who assist with administration and scoring and follow the guidance of others who are more extensively trained.

**Standard IV.** Counselors understand how to interpret and report assessment results.

Career counselors should:

- Explain scores that are commonly reported, interpret a confidence interval for an individual score based on a standard error of measurement, and consider the impreciseness of assessment results.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of a normative group when interpreting the scores of an individual or a group.
- Be skilled in communicating assessment information to the client and others, including peers, supervisors and the public.
- Evaluate their own strengths and limitations in the use of assessment instruments and in assessing clients with varying abilities as well as linguistic and/or cultural differences.
- Follow the legal and ethical principles regarding confidentiality and disclosure of assessment information, and recognize the need to abide by professional credentialing and ethical standards for the protection and use of assessments.

**Standard V.** Counselors use assessment results appropriately in decision making.

Career counselors should:

- Recognize the limitations of using a single score in making an educational or career decision and know how to access multiple sources of information to improve decisions.
- Evaluate their own expertise for making decisions based on assessment results, and also the limitations of conclusions provided by others, including the reliability and validity of computer-assisted assessment interpretations.
- Determine whether the available technical evidence is adequate to support the intended use of an assessment result for decision making, particularly when that use has not been recommended by the developer of the assessment instrument.
- Evaluate the consequences of assessment-related decisions and avoid actions that would have unintended negative consequences.

**Standard VI.** Counselors are skilled in producing, interpreting, and presenting statistical information about assessment.

Career counselors should:

- Describe data (e.g., test scores, grades, demographic information) by forming frequency distributions, preparing tables, drawing graphs, and calculating descriptive indices of central tendency, variability, and relationship.
- Compare scores from an assessment instrument with an existing distribution, describe the placement of a score within a normal distribution, and draw appropriate inferences.
- Interpret statistics used to describe characteristics of assessment instruments, especially reliability coefficients, validity statistics, and standard errors of measurement.
- Ethically use computers for data management, statistical analyses, and production of tables and graphs for reporting and interpreting results.

**Standard VII.** Counselors engage in professionally responsible assessment and evaluation practices.

Career counselors should:

- Act in accordance with American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice (2014) and National Career Development Association's Ethical Guidelines (2015).
- Adhere to professional codes and standards, including the Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (2004), to evaluate counseling practices involving assessments.
- Understand test fairness and avoid the selection of biased assessment instruments or the biased use of assessment results.
- Maintain the legal and ethical principles and practices regarding test security, reproducing copyrighted materials, and unsupervised use of assessment instruments that are not intended for self-administration.
- Obtain and maintain available credentialing that demonstrates their skills in assessment and evaluation.
- Utilize continuing education opportunities to maintain their skills on a regular basis.

**Standard VIII.** Counselors are able to effectively use assessment results and other data to evaluate career programs and interventions.

Career counselors should:

- Collect data to determine the impact of the career development activities on clients.
- Use appropriate statistics when comparing groups, making predictions, and drawing conclusions about career programs and strategies.
- Use evaluation results to improve current practices or implement more successful techniques to assist the client.
- Explain evaluation results to relevant persons, colleagues, agencies, and other stakeholders.

**Standard IX.** Counselor educators and supervisors of career counselors-in-training promote assessment skill acquisition.

Counselor educators and supervisors should:

- Keep current with scholarship related to how to teach counselors-in-training how to best use assessment instruments in their work with clients.
- Be knowledgeable in the selection, use, evaluation, and interpretation of assessment instruments and can appropriately communicate these results.

# AARC Standards for Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling

**Standard I.** Counselors understand the historical perspectives of systems concepts, theories, and assessment methods that are fundamental to marriage, couple and family counseling.

Marriage, couple, and family counselors should:

- Understand and articulate systems concepts, theories, and historical perspectives that provide the conceptual foundation for marriage, couple, and family assessment.
- Compare and contrast various models of marriage, couple, and family assessments, and explain their unit of measure and the meaning of the results.
- Assess issues of gender development, human sexuality, intergenerational dynamics, and couple processes.
- Assess couples and families across the family life cycle (i.e., premarital, newlyweds, parents with young children, parents with adolescents, parents with adult children and relationships in later life).
- Assess a broad spectrum of concomitant disorders, such as addictive disorders (e.g. alcohol, drugs, gambling, food), and psychological disorders (e.g., anxiety, depression, panic).
- Use and interpret the results of child, adolescent, and adult intelligence instruments.
- Evaluate the strengths and limitations of various theoretical models of marriage, couple, and family assessment and diagnosis.

**Standard II.** Counselors understand basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing and other assessment techniques.

Marriage, couple, and family counselors should:

- Explain the differences between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment.
- Articulate the need for and use of environmental assessment.
- Understand and use performance assessments.
- Understand the use of individual and group test and inventory methods.
- Effectively make and document behavioral observations during assessment.
- Understand the limitations of computer-managed and computer-assisted assessment methods.

**Standard III.** Counselors understand quantitative and qualitative concepts of assessment.

Marriage, couple, and family counselors should:

- Carefully evaluate the specific theoretical bases and characteristics, score validity, score reliability, and appropriateness of the instrument being used.
- Understand statistical concepts including scales of measurement, measures of central tendency, indices of variability, shapes and types of distributions, and correlations.
- Use qualitative assessment procedures including unstructured, semi-structured, and structured clinical interviews.



- Select, use, evaluate, and interpret assessment instruments.

**Standard IV.** Counselors understand the strengths and limitations of models of assessment and diagnosis, especially as they relate to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations.

Marriage, couple, and family counselors should:

- Demonstrate clinical competence when assessing couples and families of diverse cultural backgrounds including differences in age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, disability, culture, spirituality, and other factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations.
- Evaluate the accuracy and cultural relevance of behavioral health and relational diagnoses.
- Use various assessment methods that identify clients' strengths, resilience, and resources.
- Ensure that computer-generated test administration and scoring programs function and are interpreted properly so that clients are provided accurate test results.
- Screen and develop safety plans for substance abuse, child and elder maltreatment, domestic violence, physical violence, suicide potential, and dangerousness to self and others.
- Provide assessments and deliver developmentally appropriate services to clients, such as children, adolescents, elders, and clients of varying abilities.
- Apply individual, marital, couple, and family assessments appropriate for specific presenting problems, practice settings, and cultural contexts.
- Accurately score, analyze, and interpret the results of standardized testing instruments.
- Conduct structured and semi-structured clinical interviews, obtain an accurate biopsychosocial history, and assess intergenerational dynamics and contextual factors related to clients' families of origin (e.g., genograms).
- Apply qualitative assessment procedures (e.g., role playing, family sculptures, life-line assessments, direct and indirect observations) and understand their advantages and disadvantages in assessment and diagnosis.

**Standard V.** Counselors use various ethical strategies for selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment and evaluation instruments and techniques in marriage, couple, and family counseling.

Marriage, couple, and family counselors should:

- Act in accordance with the ACA Code of Ethics (American Counseling Association, 2014), Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (Joint Committee on Testing Practices, 2004), Ethical Code of the International Association for Marriage and Family Counselors, (IAMFC, 2017), Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association & National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014), Responsibilities of Users of Standardized Tests (Association for Assessment in Counseling, 2003), Rights and Responsibilities of Test Takers (Joint Committee of Testing Practices, 2002), and the Multicultural and Social Justice Competencies (2015).

- Select appropriate standardized measures based on developmental stage and interpersonal processes (e.g., couple, partner, family, system dynamics, or severity of presenting problems).
- Identify psychometric limitations when selecting and using an instrument.
- Follow all directions and procedures for selection, administration and interpretation of all evaluation instruments and use them only within proper contexts.
- Maintain test security and avoid prior coaching or dissemination of test materials, which can invalidate test results.

**Standard VI.** Counselor educators and supervisors of marriage, couple, and family counselors-in-training promote assessment skill acquisition.

Counselor educators and supervisors should:

- Keep current with scholarship related to how to teach counselors-in-training how to best use assessment instruments in their work with clients.
- Be knowledgeable in the selection, use, evaluation, and interpretation of assessment instruments and can appropriately communicate these results.

# AARC Standards for Assessment in Mental Health Counseling

**Standard I.** Mental health counselors use structured and semi-structured clinical interviews and qualitative assessment procedures (e.g., role playing, life line assessments, direct and indirect observation).

Mental health counselors should:

- Define the differences and similarities between structured and semi-structured clinical interviews.
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of structured and semi-structured clinical interviews in practice.
- Use both structured and semi-structured clinical interviews as a means to identify clients' goals for therapy and to develop treatment plans.
- Understand the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative assessment procedures.
- Apply the concepts of continuous assessment and collaborative services.

**Standard II.** Mental health counselors are skilled in instrument evaluation, selection, and usage.

Mental health counselors should:

- Select, administer, score, analyze, and interpret commonly used clinical mental health instruments.
- Identify the strengths and limitations of instruments.

**Standard III.** Mental health counselors are knowledgeable of diversity issues and the specific uses of mental health instruments.

Mental health counselors should:

- Identify the purposes of commonly used clinical mental health instruments.
- Identify limitations of instruments, including the inaccurate portrayal of persons from diverse backgrounds (e.g., culture, age, sexuality, spirituality), particularly as presenting with atypical thoughts, emotions, behavior, or psychopathology.
- Identify appropriate and inappropriate uses of commonly-used clinical mental health instruments.

**Standard IV.** Mental health counselors critically evaluate instruments.

Mental health counselors should:

- Define and describe various types of reliability and validity as well as measures of error.
- Identify acceptable reliability levels for personality, projective, intelligence, career, and specialty instruments.
- Identify the types and acceptable levels of validity typically associated with personality, projective, intelligence, career, and specialty instruments.
- Evaluate norming methods used to establish testing instruments commonly used within mental health counseling.

- Identify where and how they may locate and obtain information regarding testing instruments commonly used within mental health counseling.
- Identify means to locate and obtain assessment instruments for special populations (e.g., visually impaired persons, non-readers).
- Use computer administered and scored instruments.

**Standard V.** Mental health counselors use a broad spectrum of assessment instruments, including general personality, projective, intelligence, career, and specialty instruments which identify specific pathology or mental health in a defined area.

Mental health counselors should:

- Use instruments which aid in diagnosing psychopathology (e.g., structured and semi-structured diagnostic interviews, omnibus measures of psychopathology).
- Assess symptoms of mood disorders (e.g., depression, mania, cycling mood).
- Assess symptoms of anxiety disorders (e.g., phobic and avoidance responses, lingering reactions to stressors).
- Assess disorders of behavior dysregulation (e.g. chemical addictions, eating disorders, impulse control disorders, sexual disorders, sleep disorders).
- Assess psychological disorders associated with somatic symptoms (e.g., somatization disorders, life-style induced physical illness).
- Assess personality traits and personality disorders.
- Assess mental capacity and function (e.g., intelligence, aptitude, achievement, academic skills, learning process, and characteristics).
- Assess trauma and stressor related disorders (e.g., acute stress disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder).
- Assess schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, delusional disorder).
- Assess for suicidal and/or homicidal ideation.
- Assess for nonsuicidal self-injury.
- Assess for the presence or possibility of domestic violence.

**Standard VI.** Mental health counselors use assessment to develop effective treatment interventions and goal setting.

Mental health counselors should:

- Use assessment findings from personality, projective, intelligence, career, and specialty instruments to establish treatment goals and provide clinical interventions addressing concerns and problems.
- Use multiple assessment methods and sources (e.g., direct observation, assessment instruments, structured clinical interviews) and integrate these results in a manner that benefits clients.

**Standard VII.** Mental health counselors are skilled in communicating assessment results.

Mental health counselors should:

- Describe and obtain informed consent, when appropriate.
- Delineate specific processes to be completed before information from testing instruments can be provided to persons other than the test taker.
- Communicate assessment instrument results in a helpful, non-threatening manner that benefits clients.
- Present assessment results to clients and other nonprofessional audiences in a respectful and compassionate way, including the use of clear, unambiguous, jargon-free language, while recognizing both client strengths and presenting concerns.

**Standard VIII.** Mental health counselors can determine the efficacy of treatment programs and clinical interventions by using multiple assessment instruments with program participants.

Mental health counselors should:

- Use repeated testing evaluation designs that aid in the determination of program efficacy.
- Create or select standardized instruments that can measure treatment outcomes.

**Standard IX.** Mental health counselors continually enhance their professional development within the area of assessment.

Mental health counselors should:

- Participate in assessment training and development workshops, conferences, and other educational experiences that promote continual professional development related to assessment.
- Be aware of advancements within the area of assessment by keeping abreast of current assessment topics written within the profession's journals and other professional sources (e.g., books, test reviews, distance learning).
- Join professional associations that provide relevant assessment and mental health information.

**Standard X.** Mental health counselors are aware of the appropriate use of assessment instruments in research and in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the American Counseling Association (2014) and the American Mental Health Counseling Association (2015).

Mental health counselors should:

- Engage in research that uses assessment instruments in a manner that reflects the intended purpose of the instrument.
- Ethically use assessment instruments within the practice of research in a manner that does not cause harm to program participants.
- Choose assessment instruments which have potential to increase participant insight and promote greater participant mental health.

**Standard XI.** Advanced or supervising mental health counselors and counselor educators who train mental health counselors promote assessment skill acquisition.

Counselor educators and supervisors should:

- Meet Standard I through Standard X above.
- Use curriculum instruction methods that promote assessment and evaluation skill acquisition.

**Standard XII.** Mental health counselors, supervising counselors, and counselor educators comply with the most recent codes of ethics of the American Counseling Association (2014), American Mental Health Counseling Association (2015), National Board for Certified Counselors (2016), and with the laws and regulations of any state licensing board in which the counselor is licensed to practice mental health counseling. Mental health counselors practice in accord with the Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (2004), Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (2014), Responsibilities of Users of Standardized Tests (2003), Rights and Responsibilities of Test Takers: Guidelines and Expectations (2002), and the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (2015).

## **AARC Standards for Assessment in Substance Abuse Counseling**

**Standard I.** Substance abuse counselors are able to assess the effects and withdrawal symptoms of commonly abused drugs.

Substance abuse counselors should:

- Assess for and recognize acute intoxication syndromes for commonly abused chemicals (i.e., alcohol, benzodiazepines, marijuana, cocaine).
- Assess for and recognize withdrawal complications (i.e., seizures, delirium tremens, hallucinations).
- Assess for and recognize symptoms of inhalant use (e.g. the smell of fuel on clothes, red eyes, runny nose, cough).
- Assess for and recognize the effects of cross-addiction and dual addiction disorders.
- Stay up to date on how to assess for and recognize the effects of new and designer drugs (e.g., bath salts, synthetic marijuana)

**Standard II.** Substance abuse counselors assess the broad spectrum of concomitant disorders.

Substance abuse counselors should:

- Assess for other addictive disorders (i.e., gambling, food, sex).
- Determine if a psychological disorder (i.e., anxiety, depression, panic, post traumatic stress disorder) was present prior to, or the result of, clients' substance use.
- Assess for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Assess for suicidal and/or homicidal ideation.
- Assess for nonsuicidal self-injury.
- Assess for the presence or possibility of domestic violence.
- Use and interpret the results of adult and adolescent intelligence instruments.

**Standard III.** Substance abuse counselors are skilled in evaluating the technical quality and appropriateness of testing instruments.

Substance abuse counselors should:

- Identify acceptable reliability levels for instruments.
- Identify appropriate types of validity for commonly-used instruments.
- Evaluate the procedures used to validate commonly-used instruments.
- Locate testing instruments and information about instruments for special populations (e.g. visually impaired, nonreaders).
- Use computerized assessment instruments.
- Articulate the limitations of commonly-used instruments within the substance abuse counseling field.

**Standard IV.** Substance abuse counselors are knowledgeable regarding qualitative assessment procedures including structured and semi-structured clinical interviews.

Substance abuse counselors should:

- Be familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of structured and semi-structured clinical interviews.
- Be familiar with qualitative assessment procedures (e.g. role playing, life line assessments, direct and indirect observations).
- Understand the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative assessment procedures.
- Understand the concepts of continuous assessment and wraparound services.

**Standard V.** Substance abuse counselors employ multiple methods when assessing clients and monitoring the efficacy of treatment.

Substance abuse counselors should:

- Use paper and pencil or computerized instruments and structured interviews, as appropriate.
- Whenever possible, consult with and interview family, friends, and other corroborating collateral sources of information, while always obtaining written consent to gather information from sources other than the client.
- Monitor client progress throughout the counseling process.

**Standard VI.** Substance abuse counselors are skilled in interpreting assessment results with clients.

Substance abuse counselors should:

- Interpret assessment results in a helpful manner that emphasizes clients' strengths as well as possible problem areas.
- Explain to clients the steps that are necessary to share testing results with others (e.g. informed consent).

**Standard VII.** Substance abuse counselors are skilled in using assessment results to develop and evaluate effective treatment interventions.

Substance abuse counselors should:

- Accurately score, analyze, interpret, and communicate the results of testing.
- Create specific treatment plans based upon the results of testing.

**Standard VIII.** Substance abuse counselors are aware of the need for professional development within the assessment area.

Substance abuse counselors should:

- Participate in training needed to keep abreast of new assessment instruments, procedures, and issues.
- Keep up to date with advancements in the field of assessment by reading the appropriate professional journals, test manuals, and reports.
- Join professional associations that provide relevant assessment and substance abuse training and information.



**Standard IX.** Substance abuse counselors are aware of the appropriate use of assessment instruments in research.

Substance abuse counselors use assessment instruments:

- To determine the efficacy of their interventions.
- Appropriate for the intended populations.
- In accordance with the American Counseling Association's Ethical Standards (2014), Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education (2004), Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (2014), Responsibilities of Users of Standardized Tests (2003), Rights and Responsibilities of Test Takers (2002), and Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (2015).

**Standard X.** Counselor educators and supervisors of substance abuse counselors-in-training are able to effectively train counselors in the area of substance abuse assessment.

Counselor educators and supervisors should:

- Keep current with scholarship related to how to teach counselors-in-training how to best use assessment instruments in their work with clients.
- Be knowledgeable in the selection, use, evaluation, and interpretation of assessment instruments and can appropriately communicate these results.