Canadian Standards and Guidelines
for Career Development Practitioners

Areas of Specialization

Career Counselling

Revised 2012

NOTE

The career counselling specialization defines a unique blend of competencies from two distinct professional groups: (1) career development practitioners and (2) counselling therapists / counsellors. To function effectively in this role, **career counsellors need *all of the core competencies* from each of the two groups (i.e., they are fully competent counsellors *and* fully competent career development practitioners).** The competencies in this section are intended to define the unique scope of practice of career counsellors. Most career counsellors will also have the competencies to support assessment (S1 Assessment) and work search development (S5 – Work Development), as well as to facilitate both process and psycho-educational groups (S2 – Facilitated and Individual Group Learning).

Professional associations and regulatory bodies for *counsellors* in various jurisdictions across Canada specify educational requirements, competencies, and continuing education expectations. Similarly, several professional associations for *career development practitioners* have identified a combination of education and competencies that are required for certification. *Career counsellors*, therefore, need to satisfy both sets of requirements - those specific to career development practitioners and also those specific to counsellors.

Career counsellors generally have graduate level education (e.g., Masters of Counselling, Social Work, Education, or Psychology) and have completed a supervised counselling practicum or internship. Most fit within a scholar-practitioner role (i.e., their work is grounded in theory and supported by research). Committed to evidence-based practice, career counsellors are constantly evaluating their own practice and their clients' growth and change.

Most *career counsellors* are voluntarily members of a professional association (e.g., CCPA) or are regulated by a professional college (e.g.,

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S3 Career Counselling

S3.1 Possess Career Counselling Knowledge

S3.1.1 explain major *counselling* theories and models

Why is this competency important?
- to be able to integrate different theories together to come up with the best way to help the clients
- To understand the different ways that people make choices, achieve transitions and progress through their work lives

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:

a) explain the major theories and models pertaining to counselling (see C.3.1.1) ——

b) describe relevant theories and models in terms of:
- basic premises, assumptions and biases
- strengths and limitations, including research support

S3.1.2 explain major *career development* theories and models

Why is this competency important?
- to follow a method of practice guided by theory
- to be aware of personal biases
- to understand that there are different theories and beliefs about how individuals develop preferences, achieve transitions and progress through their working lives
- to be able to integrate counselling and career development theories together conceptualize clients' situations and develop appropriate intervention plans
- to follow an evidence-based method of practice guided by theory

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a) explain major career development theories and models (see C.3.1.2) ——

b) describe the theories and models in terms of:
- basic premises, assumptions and biases
- strengths and limitations, including research support
- *career counselling* applications

S3   Career Counselling

S3.1   Possess Career Counselling Knowledge

S3.1.3 explain major change and transition models

Why is this competency important?
- to understand different theories and beliefs about how individuals react to change and transitions
- to follow a method of practice guided by theory
- to be aware of personal biases

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a) describe how change and transition affect clients moving through the career process (see C.3.1.3)
b) explain the major change and transition theories and models , e.g., those of:
- *Bridges*
- *Schlossberg*
- *Prochaska & DiClemente*
c) describe the theories and models in terms of:
- basic premises, assumptions and biases
- strengths and limitations, including research support
- career counselling applications
- relevant coping strategies for navigating change and transition

S3.1.4   describe barriers to career development

Why is this competency important?
- to assess barriers to employment and career/life success
- to understand clients' worlds from their own frame of reference
- to help clients cope with and overcome barriers in order to achieve career goals

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a) identify the complexity and interconnectedness of barriers. Components may be:
- contextual
- systemic
- organizational
- affective
- cognitive
- behavioural
- emotional
b) describe the impact of barriers, e.g.,
- *diversity, e.g.: the client may be dealing with:*
    - *cultural issues*
    - *language or literacy issues*
    - *discrimination*
    - *disabilities*
    - *gender issues*
    - *issues related to sexual identity*
- *development or adjustment issues, e.g.:*
    - *family dysfunctions*
    - *mental health problems*
    - *addictions*
    - *insufficient training*
- *organizational challenges, e.g.:*
    - *restrictive policies*
    - *workplace accommodation issues*
- *perception of self and others, e.g., the client may lack:*
    - *self-efficacy*
    - *realistic self-knowledge*
- *psychological reactions to change, e.g.:*
    - *trouble adjusting to unemployment, injury or illness*
- *ineffective decision-making styles, e.g.:*
    - *difficulty comparing alternatives*
    - *only one way of thinking*
    - *impulsive decision making*

- *low motivation, e.g.:*
  - *procrastination*
  - *underlying issues, e.g., fear*
c) identify and promote organizational policies and practices that support diversity

S3   Career Counselling

S3.1   Possess Career Counselling Knowledge

S3.1.5   access, critically evaluate, and use career resources, labour market information, and educational/training information

Why is this competency important?
- to be aware of the numerous resources available
- to use resources effectively with clients
- to assist clients to access, critically evaluate, and use relevant information to support career/education planning and work search

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a) identify common computerized, web-based, and print career planning systems and information resources,

b) describe information and resources in terms of:
  - strengths and limitations
  - basic premises, assumptions and biases
  - access for clients
  - career counselling applications
  - applicability to clients
c) discuss with clients the steps involved in using the information resources

S3   Career Counselling

S3.1   Possess Career Counselling Knowledge

S3.1.6 describe types of educational/training opportunities and resources

Why is this competency important?
- to develop individualized career plans
- to make clients aware of options

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a)   describe education and training opportunities, e.g.,
- *degree programs*
- *apprenticeships*
- *certificate programs*
- *distance education*
- *private training providers*
- *armed forces*
- *diploma programs*
- *on-the-job training*
- *available financial aid*
- *volunteer work*

b)   evaluate educational training opportunities and relevant resources :
- use the evaluation to determine which programs meet client needs
- identify funding sources
- identify financial aid available
c)   explore the expected impact on other life roles of enrolling in education/training (see C.3.1.4), e.g.,
- daycare or eldercare requirements
- self-care
- financial impact
- relocation
d)   encourage clients to liaise with the appropriate contacts independently, when possible

S3   Career Counselling

S3.1 Possess Career Counselling Knowledge

S3.1.7   work with labour market information

Why is this competency important?
- to ensure clients' career plans are personally appropriate

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a)   identify the sources of labour market information, e.g., *Job Futures, Prospects, regional labour market information, local training boards, informational interviews (see C.3.1.7)*
b)   analyze and interpret labour market information in terms of:
- basic premises, assumptions and biases
- strengths and limitations, including research support
- career counselling applications
- accuracy and timeliness (i.e., is it current?)
c)   describe the steps involved in using labour market information with clients in a relevant manner, e.g., *connect trends with classroom activities*

S3 Career Counselling

S3.2 Demonstrate Method of Practice in Interactions with Clients

S3.2.1 develop a method of practice that is grounded in established or recognized ideas

Why is this competency important?
- to conduct practice guided by theory and measure outcomes (i.e., gather evidence of success)
- to ensure consistency and flexibility in your counselling approach
- to develop appropriate and effective strategies and techniques for assisting clients
- to avoid burnout, vicarious trauma, or compassion fatigue

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a) synthesize theories and models to establish a personally-held model or theory (this may be a single model, a combination of models, or a personally-evolved model)
b) describe the personally-held model or theory:
   - explain the influence the model has on his/her method of practice
   - identify his/her own biases
c) orient client to the therapeutic process
   - describe scope of practice
   - explain counsellor and client roles/responsibilities
   - discuss limits of confidentiality
   - maintain appropriate boundaries
d) integrate the interdependence of life planning, work and society into his/her method of practice, considering the:
   - contextual factors affecting client decision making, e.g., *labour market trends, technology, globalization, privatization*
   - holistic experience pertaining to life planning
e) establish a professional development plan to keep up-to-date with issues, trends, technologies and new applications in career counselling approaches
f) read current career and employment counselling literature (e.g., CJCD, CDQ, JEC, IJEVG)
g) maintain confidential documentation, case notes, and client files appropriate to the client's needs and organizational or jurisdictional requirements (e.g., as required by law)

S3 Career Counselling

S3.2 Demonstrate Method of Practice in Interactions with Clients

S3.2.2 establish and maintain a collaborative relationship with clients

Why is this competency important?
- to allow clients to become fully engaged and active in the counselling process

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a) demonstrate:
   - professional attributes (see C1.1.2)
   - communication skills (see C2.2)
   - skills required to establish and maintain collaborative work relationships (see C2.2.6)
b) ensure interactions are therapeutic and client-focused:
   - clarify clients' expectations, needs and goals
   - identify and respond to clients' personal characteristics related to career development
   - get clients' informed consent before assessment or intervention
c) provide clients with information:
   - explain his/her method of practice and the process of counselling
   - describe all service options available
   - give constructive feedback about clients' progress
d) respond to the barriers that may appear in counselling relationships
e) help clients to be self- and goal-directed
   - facilitate clients' independence in taking action or initiating new processes

Notes
- Establishing a collaborative relationship that is respectful, engaging and non-judgmental is very important to successful outcomes.
- It is a good idea for a career counsellor to follow up with clients during different stages of the process.

S3   Career Counselling

S3.2   Demonstrate Method of Practice in Interactions with Clients

S3.2.3   explore issues

Why is this competency important?
• to assist clients in identifying their priorities

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a) apply knowledge and skills of assessment (see S1)
b) engage in ongoing assessment (non-standardized and/or standardized) and continuously integrate emerging information to help clients identify and understand relevant aspects of their situations, e.g.,
   • *personal characteristics related to careers*
   • *purpose, passion and dreams*
   • *work maintenance issues*
   • *social contextual conditions affecting careers*
   • *barriers*
   • *values*
   • *familial, subcultural, and cultural structures and functions as they relate to careers*
   • *career decision-making processes*
   • *attitudes towards work and workers*
   • *biases toward work and workers, such as:*
      - *gender*
      - *age*
      - *sexual orientation*
      - *religious affiliation*
      - *race*
      - *cultural stereotypes*
   • *risk level for disorders, self-harm, or suicide*
   • *career and life narratives including stories and associated meanings*
c) challenge and encourage clients to explore options:
   • discuss potential courses of action
   • prioritize issues

Note: Clients "don't know what they don't know" (i.e., they may begin in the unconscious incompetence stage in the 4 Stages of Learning model). Effective career counsellors will conduct a thorough needs assessment, looking beyond the obvious to identify what is keeping the client from successfully resolving his/her career problems and establishing / re-establishing a relevant career path

S3   Career Counselling

S3.2   Demonstrate Method of Practice in Interactions with Clients

S3.2.4 develop and implement a therapeutic process for achieving clients' goals that is consistent with own method of practice

Why is this competency important?
• to enable clients to become actively engaged in the counselling process
• to enable clients to take action

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a) determine initial goals jointly with clients using appropriate strategies, e.g.,
   • *reframing*
   • *challenging beliefs*
   • *affirmations*
   • *brainstorming*
   • *reality checks*
   • *stories*
   • *clients' dream jobs*
   • *guided imagery*
b) determine with clients a process for reaching goals, using appropriate strategies, e.g.,
   • *identify the steps involved*
   • *identify support systems*
   • *identify short- and/or long-term goals*
   • *select a model of decision making*
   • *establish manageable time frames*
c) determine the indicators of success with clients using appropriate strategies, e.g.,
   • *self-monitoring forms*
   • *subjective impressions*
   • *goal achievement*
   • *self-reports*
   • *check lists*
   • *standardized tests*
d) select career development resources and practices that respond to diversity and do not create barriers for success
e) tailor process to clients:
   • consider the clients' age and developmental stage
   • determine appropriate interventions and levels of structure required
   • use computerized career planning systems and information resources with clients, as appropriate
   • use educational opportunities and resources with clients, as appropriate

- use labour market information with clients, as appropriate
- recognize when to refer client and refer / follow-up appropriately

Notes
- This process can be used with clients seeking or progressing in work.
- Some of the strategies used to assist clients' progress in work include self-directed learning, corporate mentoring, company-sponsored training, and cross-training.

S3 Career Counselling

S3.2 Demonstrate Method of Practice in Interactions with Clients

S3.2.5 monitor and evaluate progress

Why is this competency important?
- to increase probability of success
- to help both clients and practitioners remain motivated and engaged in the process by identifying indicators of success
- to help clients and practitioners spot difficulties early and to help them identify more appropriate strategies
- to end the therapeutic process appropriately, ensuring supports/resources are in place
- to evaluate practice and improve services

To demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must:
a) monitor the indicators of success
b) adjust the process and goals, as necessary
c) keep records of the outcomes
d) close the therapeutic process,
e) deal effectively with premature endings
f) evaluate practice

Notes
- Career counsellors should look for patterns with clients and use this information to adjust future practice (see C1.4.4).
- In addition to the competency outlined in C1.4.3 (document clients' interactions and progress), refer to the ethical guidelines applicable to the creation and storage of records, e.g., *CPA, Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA).* Career counsellors will need to fulfill their contractual obligations with regards to record keeping.