

Counselor Competencies Scale—Revised (CCS-R) ©

(Lambie, Mullen, Swank, & Blount, 2015)

The *Counselor Competencies Scale—Revised* (CCS-R) assesses counselors' and trainees' skills development and professional competencies. Additionally, the CCS-R provides counselors and trainees with direct feedback regarding their demonstrated ability to apply counseling skills and facilitate therapeutic conditions, and their counseling dispositions (dominant qualities) and behaviors, offering the counselors and trainees practical areas for improvement to support their development as effective and ethical professional counselors.

Scales Evaluation Guidelines

- **Exceeds Expectations / Demonstrates Competencies (5)** = the counselor or trainee demonstrates **strong** (i.e., *exceeding* the expectations of a beginning professional counselor) knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the specified counseling skill(s), ability to facilitate therapeutic conditions, and professional disposition(s) and behavior(s).
- **Meets Expectations / Demonstrates Competencies (4)** = the counselor or trainee demonstrates **consistent** and **proficient** knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the specified counseling skill(s), ability to facilitate therapeutic conditions, and professional disposition(s) and behavior(s). A beginning professional counselor should be at the “Demonstrates Competencies” level at the conclusion of his or her practicum and/or internship.
- **Near Expectations / Developing towards Competencies (3)** = the counselor or trainee demonstrates **inconsistent** and **limited** knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the specified counseling skill(s), ability to facilitate therapeutic conditions, and professional disposition(s) and behavior(s).
- **Below Expectations / Insufficient / Unacceptable (2)** = the counselor or trainee demonstrates **limited** or **no evidence** of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the specified counseling skill(s), ability to facilitate therapeutic conditions, and professional disposition(s) and behavior(s).
- **Harmful (1)** = the counselor or trainee demonstrates harmful use of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the specified counseling skill(s), ability to facilitate therapeutic conditions, and professional disposition(s) and behavior(s).

Directions: Evaluate the counselor's or trainee's counseling skills, ability to facilitate therapeutic conditions, and professional dispositions & behaviors per rubric evaluation descriptions and record rating in the “score” column on the left.



CACREP (2016) Common Core Standards

- Strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice (Section II, *Standard 1.k.*).
- Self-care strategies appropriate to the counselor role (Section II, *Standard 1.l.*).
- Multicultural counseling competencies (Section II, *Standard 2.c.*).
- A general framework for understanding differing abilities and strategies for differentiated interventions (CACREP, 2016, Section II, *Standard 3.h.*).
- Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for establishing and maintaining in-person and technology-assisted relationships (Section II, *Standard 5.d.*).
- Counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence the counseling processes (Section II, *Standard 5.f.*).
- Essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills (Section II, *Standard 5.g.*).
- Developmentally relevant counseling treatment or intervention plans (Section II, *Standard 5.h.*).
- Processes for aiding students in developing a personal model of counseling (Section II, *Standard 5.n.*).
- The counselor education program faculty has a systematic process in place for the use of individual student assessment data in relation to retention, remediation, and dismissal (Section 4, *Standard H.*).
- Professional practice, which includes practicum and internship, provides for the application of theory and the development of counseling skills under supervision. These experiences will provide opportunities for students to counsel clients who represent the ethnic and demographic diversity of their community (Section III, *Professional Practice*).
- Entry-Level Professional Practice and Practicum (Section III, *Professional Practice*, p. 13).
 - a) Students are covered by individual professional counseling liability insurance policies while enrolled in practicum and internship.
 - b) Supervision of practicum students includes program-appropriate audio/video recordings and/or live supervision of students' interactions with clients.
 - c) Formative and summative evaluations of the student's counseling performance and ability to integrate and apply knowledge are conducted as part of the student's practicum.
 - d) Students must complete supervised counseling practicum experiences that total a minimum of 100 clock hours over a full academic term that is a minimum of 10 weeks.



- e) Practicum students must complete at least 40 clock hours of direct service with actual clients that contributes to the development of counseling skills.
- f) Practicum students have weekly interaction with supervisors that averages one hour per week of individual and/or triadic supervision throughout the practicum by (1) a counselor education program faculty member, (2) a student supervisor who is under the supervision of a counselor education program faculty member, or (3) a site supervisor who is working in consultation on a regular schedule with a counselor education program faculty member in accordance with the supervision agreement.
- g) Practicum students participate in an average of 1½ hours per week of group supervision on a regular schedule throughout the practicum. Group supervision must be provided by a counselor education program faculty member or a student supervisor who is under the supervision of a counselor education program faculty member.

CACREP (2016) Specialty Standards

- Clinical Mental Health Counseling
 - Techniques and interventions for prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues (3. Practice, *Standard b.*).
- Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling
 - Techniques and interventions of marriage, couple, and family counseling (3. Practice, *Standard c.*).
- School Counseling
 - Techniques of personal/social counseling in school settings (3. Practice, *Standard f.*).



Part I: Counseling Skills & Therapeutic Conditions

#	Score	Primary Counseling Skills(s)	Specific Counseling Skills and Therapeutic Conditions Descriptors	Exceeds Expectations /Demonstrates Competencies (5)	Meets Expectations /Demonstrates Competencies (4)	Near Expectations/ Developing towards Competencies (3)	Below Expectations/ Unacceptable (2)	Harmful (1)
1.A		Nonverbal Skills	Includes Body Position, Eye Contact, Posture, Distance from Client, Voice Tone, Rate of Speech, Use of silence, etc. (<i>attuned to the emotional state and cultural norms of the clients</i>)	Demonstrates effective nonverbal communication skills, conveying connectedness & empathy (85%).	Demonstrates effective nonverbal communication skills for the majority of counseling sessions (70%).	Demonstrates inconsistency in his or her nonverbal communication skills.	Demonstrates limited nonverbal communication skills.	Demonstrates poor nonverbal communication skills, such as ignores client &/or gives judgmental looks.
1.B		Encouragers	Includes Minimal Encouragers & Door Openers such as "Tell me more about...", "Hmm"	Demonstrates appropriate use of encouragers, which supports development of a therapeutic relationship (85%).	Demonstrates appropriate use of encouragers for the majority of counseling sessions, which supports development of a therapeutic relationship (70%).	Demonstrates inconsistency in his or her use of appropriate encouragers.	Demonstrates limited ability to use appropriate encouragers.	Demonstrates poor ability to use appropriate encouragers, such as using skills in a judgmental manner.
1.C		Questions	Use of Appropriate Open & Closed Questioning (<i>e.g., avoidance of double questions</i>)	Demonstrates appropriate use of open & close-ended questions, with an emphasis on open-ended question (85%).	Demonstrates appropriate use of open & close-ended questions for the majority of counseling sessions (70%).	Demonstrates inconsistency in using open-ended questions & may use closed questions for prolonged periods.	Demonstrates limited ability to use open-ended questions with restricted effectiveness.	Demonstrates poor ability to use open-ended questions, such as questions tend to confuse clients or restrict the counseling process.
1.D		Reflecting ^a Paraphrasing	Basic Reflection of Content – Paraphrasing (<i>With couples and families, paraphrasing the different clients' multiple perspectives</i>)	Demonstrates appropriate use of paraphrasing as a primary therapeutic approach (85%).	Demonstrates appropriate use of paraphrasing (majority of counseling sessions; 70%).	Demonstrates paraphrasing inconsistently & inaccurately or mechanical or parroted responses.	Demonstrates limited proficiency in paraphrasing or is often inaccurate.	Demonstrates poor ability to paraphrase, such as being judgmental &/or dismissive.
1.E		Reflecting ^b Reflection of Feelings	Reflection of Feelings (<i>With couples and families, reflection of each clients' feelings</i>)	Demonstrates appropriate use of reflection of feelings as a primary approach (85%).	Demonstrates appropriate use of reflection of feelings (majority of counseling sessions; 70%).	Demonstrates reflection of feelings inconsistently & is not matching the client.	Demonstrates limited proficiency in reflecting feelings &/or is often inaccurate.	Demonstrates poor ability to reflective feelings, such as being judgmental &/or dismissive.
1.F		Reflecting ^c Summarizing	Summarizing content, feelings, behaviors, & future plans (<i>With couples and families, summarizing relational patterns of interaction</i>)	Demonstrates consistent ability to use summarization to include content, feelings, behaviors, and future plans (85%).	Demonstrates ability to appropriately use summarization to include content, feelings, behaviors, and future plans (majority of counseling sessions; 70%).	Demonstrates inconsistent & inaccurate ability to use summarization.	Demonstrates limited ability to use summarization (e.g., summary suggests counselor did <i>not</i> understand clients or is overly focused on content rather than process).	Demonstrates poor ability to summarize, such as being judgmental &/or dismissive.

#	Score	Primary Counseling Skills(s)	Specific Counseling Skills and Therapeutic Conditions Descriptors	Exceeds Expectations /Demonstrates Competencies (5)	Meets Expectations /Demonstrates Competencies (4)	Near Expectations/ Developing towards Competencies (3)	Below Expectations/ Unacceptable (2)	Harmful (1)
1.G		Advanced Reflection (Meaning)	Advanced Reflection of Meaning, including Values and Core Beliefs (<i>taking counseling to a deeper level</i>)	Demonstrates consistent use of advanced reflection & promotes discussions of greater depth during counseling sessions (85%).	Demonstrates ability to appropriately use advanced reflection, supporting increased exploration in session (majority of counseling sessions; 70%).	Demonstrates inconsistent & inaccurate ability to use advanced reflection. Counseling sessions appear superficial.	Demonstrates limited ability to use advanced reflection &/or switches topics in counseling often.	Demonstrates poor ability to use advanced reflection, such as being judgmental &/or dismissive.
1.H		Confrontation	Counselor challenges clients to recognize & evaluate inconsistencies	Demonstrates the ability to challenge clients through verbalizing inconsistencies & discrepancies in the clients' words &/or actions in a supportive fashion. Balance of challenge & support (85%).	Demonstrates the ability to challenge clients through verbalizing inconsistencies & discrepancies in the clients' words &/or actions in a supportive fashion (can confront, but hesitant) or was <i>not</i> needed; therefore, appropriately <i>not</i> used (majority of counseling sessions; 70%).	Demonstrates inconsistent ability to challenge clients through verbalizing inconsistencies & discrepancies in clients' words &/or actions in a supportive fashion. Used minimally/missed opportunity.	Demonstrates limited ability to challenge clients through verbalizing discrepancies in the client's words &/or actions in a supportive & caring fashion, &/or skill is lacking.	Demonstrates poor ability to use confrontation, such as degrading client, harsh, judgmental, &/or aggressive.
1.I		Goal Setting	Counselor collaborates with clients to establish realistic, appropriate, & attainable therapeutic goals (<i>With couples and families, goal setting supports clients in establishing common therapeutic goals</i>)	Demonstrates consistent ability to establish collaborative & appropriate therapeutic goals with clients (85%).	Demonstrates ability to establish collaborative & appropriate therapeutic goals with client (majority of counseling sessions; 70%).	Demonstrates inconsistent ability to establish collaborative & appropriate therapeutic goals with clients.	Demonstrates limited ability to establish collaborative, appropriate therapeutic goals with clients.	Demonstrates poor ability to develop collaborative therapeutic goals, such as identifying unattainable goals, and agreeing with goals that may be harmful to the clients.
1.J		Focus of Counseling	Counselor focuses (or refocuses) clients on their therapeutic goals (<i>i.e., purposeful counseling</i>)	Demonstrates consistent ability to focus &/or refocus counseling on clients' goal attainment (85%).	Demonstrates ability to focus &/or refocus counseling on clients' goal attainment (majority of counseling sessions; 70%).	Demonstrates inconsistent ability to focus &/or refocus counseling on clients' therapeutic goal attainment.	Demonstrates limited ability to focus &/or refocus counseling on clients' therapeutic goal attainment.	Demonstrates poor ability to maintain focus in counseling, such as counseling moves focus away from clients' goals
1.K		Facilitate Therapeutic Environmental_a: Empathy & Caring	Expresses accurate empathy & care; Counselor is "present" and open to clients (<i>includes immediacy and concreteness</i>)	Demonstrates consistent ability to be empathic & uses appropriate responses (85%).	Demonstrates ability to be empathic & uses appropriate responses (majority of counseling sessions; 70%).	Demonstrates inconsistent ability to be empathic &/or use appropriate responses.	Demonstrates limited ability to be empathic &/or uses appropriate responses.	Demonstrates poor ability to be empathic & caring, such as creating an unsafe space for clients.
1.L		Facilitate Therapeutic Environment_b: Respect & Compassion	Counselor expresses appropriate respect & compassion for clients	Demonstrates consistent ability to be respectful, accepting, & compassionate with clients (85%).	Demonstrates ability to be respectful, accepting, & compassionate with clients (majority of counseling sessions; 70%).	Demonstrates inconsistent ability to be respectful, accepting, & compassionate with clients.	Demonstrates limited ability to be respectful, accepting, &/or compassionate with clients.	Demonstrates poor ability to be respectful & compassionate with clients, such as having conditional respect.



Part 2: Counseling Dispositions & Behaviors

#	Score	Primary Counseling Dispositions & Behaviors	Specific Counseling Disposition & Behavior Descriptors	Exceeds Expectations /Demonstrates Competencies (5)	Meets Expectations /Demonstrates Competencies (4)	Near Expectations/ Developing towards Competencies (3)	Below Expectations/ Unacceptable (2)	Harmful (1)
2.A		Professional Ethics	Adheres to the ethical guidelines of the ACA, ASCA, IAMFC, APA, & NBCC; including practices within competencies	Demonstrates consistent & advanced (<i>i.e., exploration & deliberation</i>) ethical behavior & judgments.	Demonstrates consistent ethical behavior & judgments.	Demonstrates ethical behavior & judgments, but on a concrete level with a basic ethical decision-making process.	Demonstrates limited ethical behavior & judgment, and a limited ethical decision-making process.	Demonstrates poor ethical behavior & judgment, such as violating the ethical codes &/or makes poor decisions
2.B		Professional Behavior	Behaves in a professional manner towards supervisors, peers, & clients (e.g., emotional regulation); Is respectful and appreciative to the culture of colleagues and is able to effectively collaborate with others	Demonstrates consistent & advanced respectfulness and thoughtfulness, & appropriate within <i>all</i> professional interactions.	Demonstrates consistent respectfulness and thoughtfulness, & appropriate within <i>all</i> professional interactions.	Demonstrates inconsistent respectfulness and thoughtfulness, & appropriate within professional interactions.	Demonstrates limited respectfulness and thoughtfulness & acts inappropriate within some professional interactions.	Demonstrates poor professional behavior, such as repeatedly being disrespectful of others &/or impedes the professional atmosphere of the counseling setting / course.
2.C		Professional & Personal Boundaries	Maintains appropriate boundaries with supervisors, peers, & clients	Demonstrates consistent & strong appropriate boundaries with supervisors, peers, & clients.	Demonstrates consistent appropriate boundaries with supervisors, peers, & clients.	Demonstrates appropriate boundaries inconsistently with supervisors, peers, & clients.	Demonstrates inappropriate boundaries with supervisors, peers, & clients.	Demonstrates poor boundaries with supervisors, peers, & clients; such as engaging in dual relationships.
2.D		Knowledge & Adherence to Site and Course Policies	Demonstrates an understanding & appreciation for <i>all</i> counseling site and course policies & procedures	Demonstrates consistent adherence to <i>all</i> counseling site and course policies & procedures, including strong attendance and engagement.	Demonstrates adherence to most counseling site and course policies & procedures, including strong attendance and engagement.	Demonstrates inconsistent adherence to counseling site and course policies & procedures, including attendance and engagement.	Demonstrates limited adherence to counseling site and course policies & procedures, including attendance and engagement.	Demonstrates poor adherence to counseling site and course policies, such as failing to adhere to policies after discussing with supervisor / instructor.
2.E		Record Keeping & Task Completion	Completes <i>all</i> weekly record keeping & tasks correctly & promptly (e.g., case notes, psychosocial reports, treatment plans, supervisory report)	Completes <i>all</i> required record keeping, documentation, and assigned tasks in a thorough, timely, & comprehensive fashion.	Completes <i>all</i> required record keeping, documentation, and tasks in a competent & timely fashion.	Completes <i>all</i> required record keeping, documentation, and tasks, but in an inconsistent & questionable fashion.	Completes required record keeping, documentation, and tasks inconsistently & in a poor fashion.	Failure to complete paperwork &/or tasks by specified deadline.



#	Score	Primary Counseling Dispositions & Behaviors	Specific Counseling Disposition & Behavior Descriptors	Exceeds Expectations /Demonstrates Competencies (5)	Meets Expectations /Demonstrates Competencies (4)	Near Expectations/ Developing towards Competencies (3)	Below Expectations/ Unacceptable (2)	Harmful (1)
2.F		Multicultural Competence in Counseling Relationship	Demonstrates respect for culture (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, spirituality, religion, sexual orientation, disability, social class, etc.) and awareness of and responsiveness to ways in which culture interacts with the counseling relationship	Demonstrates consistent & advanced multicultural competencies (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation, & skills) in interactions with clients.	Demonstrates multicultural competencies (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation, & skills) in interactions with clients.	Demonstrates inconsistent multicultural competencies (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation, & skills) in interactions with clients.	Demonstrates limited multicultural competencies (knowledge, self-awareness, appreciation, & skills) in interactions with clients.	Demonstrates poor multicultural competencies, such as being disrespectful, dismissive, and defensive regarding the significance of culture in the counseling relationship.
2.G		Emotional Stability & Self-control	Demonstrates self-awareness and emotional stability (i.e., congruence between mood & affect) & self-control (i.e., impulse control) in relationships with clients	Demonstrates consistent emotional stability & appropriateness in interpersonal interactions with clients.	Demonstrates emotional stability & appropriateness in interpersonal interactions with clients.	Demonstrates inconsistent emotional stability & appropriateness in interpersonal interactions with clients.	Demonstrates limited emotional stability & appropriateness in interpersonal interactions with clients.	Demonstrates poor emotional stability & appropriateness in interpersonal interactions with client, such as having high levels of emotional reactants with clients.
2.H		Motivated to Learn & Grow / Initiative	Demonstrates engagement in learning & development of his or her counseling competencies	Demonstrates consistent and strong engagement in promoting his or her professional and personal growth & development.	Demonstrates consistent engagement in promoting his or her professional and personal growth & development.	Demonstrates inconsistent engagement in promoting his or her professional and personal growth & development.	Demonstrates limited engagement in promoting his or her professional and personal growth & development.	Demonstrates poor engagement in promoting his or her professional and personal growth & development, such as expressing lack of appreciation for profession &/or apathy to learning.
2.I		Openness to Feedback	Responds non-defensively & alters behavior in accordance with supervisory &/or instructor feedback	Demonstrates consistent and strong openness to supervisory &/or instructor feedback & implements suggested changes.	Demonstrates consistent openness to supervisory &/or instructor feedback & implements suggested changes.	Demonstrates openness to supervisory &/or instructor feedback; however, does <i>not</i> implement suggested changes.	Demonstrates a lack of openness to supervisory &/or instructor feedback & does <i>not</i> implement suggested changes.	Demonstrates <i>no</i> openness to supervisory &/or instructor feedback & is defensive &/or dismissive when given feedback.
2.J		Flexibility & Adaptability	Demonstrates ability to adapt to changing circumstance, unexpected events, & new situations	Demonstrates consistent and strong ability to adapt & “reads- & flexes” appropriately.	Demonstrates consistent ability to adapt & “reads- & flexes” appropriately.	Demonstrated an inconsistent ability to adapt & flex to his or her clients’ diverse changing needs.	Demonstrates a limited ability to adapt & flex to his or her clients’ diverse changing needs.	Demonstrates a poor ability to adapt to his or her clients’ diverse changing needs, such as being rigid in work with clients.
2.K		Congruence & Genuineness	Demonstrates ability to be present and “be true to oneself”	Demonstrates consistent and strong ability to be genuine & accepting of self & others.	Demonstrates consistent ability to be genuine & accepting of self & others.	Demonstrates inconsistent ability to be genuine & accepting of self & others.	Demonstrates a limited ability to be genuine & accepting of self & others (incongruent).	Demonstrates a poor ability to be genuine & accepting of self & others, such as being disingenuous.



Narrative Feedback from Supervising Instructor / Clinical Supervisor

Please note the counselor's or trainee's areas of strength, which you have observed:

Please note the counselor's or trainee's areas that warrant improvement, which you have observed:

Please comment on the counselor's or trainee's general performance during his or her clinical experience to this point:

Counselor's or Trainee's Name (print)

Date

Supervisor's Name (print)

Date

Date CCS-R was reviewed with Counselor or Trainee

Counselor's or Trainee's Signature

Date

Supervisor's Signature

Date

Note. If the supervising instructor / clinical supervisor is concerned about the counselor's or trainee's progress in demonstrating the appropriate counseling competencies, he or she should have another appropriately trained supervisor observe the counselor's or trainee's work with clients to provide additional feedback to the counselor or trainee.

