# GUIDANCE COUNSELLING
# CORE COMPETENCIES & PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Institute of Guidance Counsellors
*Institiúid na gComhairleoirí Treorach*

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| **ACCS** | Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools |
| AEGAI | Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland |
| **AIOSP** | Association Internationale d'Orientation Scolaire et Professionnelle |
| APA | American Psychological Association |
| **BJGC** | British Journal of Guidance Counselling |
| BPS | British Psychological Association |
| **CEDEFOP** | European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training |
| CDSGC | Committee of Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling |
| **CICA** | Career Industry Council of Australia |
| CMS | Career Management Skills |
| **DES** | Department of Education and Skills |
| DJEI | Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation |
| **EAEA** | European Association for the Training of Adults |
| EGFSN | Expert Group on Future Skills Needs |
| **ELGPN** | European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network |
| ETBI | Education and Training Board Ireland |
| **FYA** | Foundation for Young Australians |
| IAVG | International Association for Vocational Guidance |
| **IAEVG** | International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance |
| ICCDPP | International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy |
| **IGC** | Institute of Guidance Counsellors |
| NCGE | National Centre for Guidance in Education |
| **NGF** | National Guidance Forum |
| NICE | Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe |
| **NRDSH** | National Registry of Deliberate Self Harm |
| NSACPP | National Standards & Accreditation of Career Practitioners Project (Australia) |
| **OECD** | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PSI | Psychological Society of Ireland |
| **QUALIFAX** | National Learner's Database |
| SOLAS | Further Education and Training Authority |
| **TRACE** | Transparent Competencies in Europe |
| TUSLA | Child and Family Agency |

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On behalf of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), the authors of *Guidance Counselling:* Core Competencies and Professional Practice are

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## DISCLAIMER

**The authors have made every effort to acknowledge information sources. The IGC accepts no responsibility for omissions and, in the event of exclusions, will undertake to rectify in future editions of this document.**

**The inclusion of a source of information or publication is not to be interpreted as an endorsement by the IGC of the entire content, policies or guidance contained in this source, where these are at variance with stated, documented or published policy positions of the professional body.**

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# INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors, in publishing this document, *Guidance Counselling: Core Competencies and Professional Practice*, is giving expression to two of the aims set out in its initial discussion document, *A Vision for the Future Practice of Guidance Counselling in Irelan*d (2013) namely,

- ✓ **the promotion of a holistic model of guidance counselling,**
- ✓ **the articulation of a generic professional competency framework**

The evidence for the guidance counsellor's contribution to fostering clients' critical self-knowledge, attitudes and life-building skills is growing. Guidance counsellors have an impact on educational, social and economic outcomes. This is a continuous process throughout the "client" lifespan from helping to reduce school dropout and increasing student academic achievement initially; to providing more motivated and intentional lifelong learners, at whatever stage of their lives and career development, thus enabling them to manage proactively career choices and transitions to become architects of their own futures.

Such individual skills are essential in today's knowledge economy. Uncertainty and constant change will challenge our citizens to possess the resilience to adapt positively, often in adverse conditions, across the lifespan.

A clear articulation of the need for a holistic model of guidance counselling, a model which tends to be a compromise between the best of American practice, emphasizing personal counselling, and that of some European countries which focus on the narrower concept of vocational guidance, has never been more imperative.

This document aims to give a clear analysis of the competencies underpinning the professional role and functions of the guidance counsellor. The authors reviewed the international literature on the core competencies required by guidance counsellors before arriving at those listed in this document. The competencies outlined are the foundational generic competencies required of the guidance counsellor, irrespective of the context or sector in which the guidance counselling professional works.

The acquisition of these competencies is a life-long task of personal and professional development underpinned by a willingness to engage constantly in reflexive practice in order to master the theoretical knowledge and skills base required.

This document is aimed primarily at the guidance counselling professional in whatever context they work, and equally importantly, at all interested stakeholders: policy makers, key partners, and also the wider public who would like to learn about the work, knowledge base, and core competencies of the guidance counselling professional.

Finally, in presenting this document, the Institute of Guidance Counsellors hopes to present a clear unambiguous picture of the knowledge, values and attitudes which constitute the basis for the competencies which guidance counsellors possess. This practice document is intended to imbue members with confidence in their competencies; to encourage them to continue the task of their maintenance and further development in order to help their clients to face the challenges ahead; and to increase the knowledge, understanding, and appreciation, of those in the wider guidance counselling community to the rich and valuable resource that is guidance counselling.

# PART ONE

## THE GUIDANCE COUNSELLING COMPETENCY & PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

# Introduction – The Framework

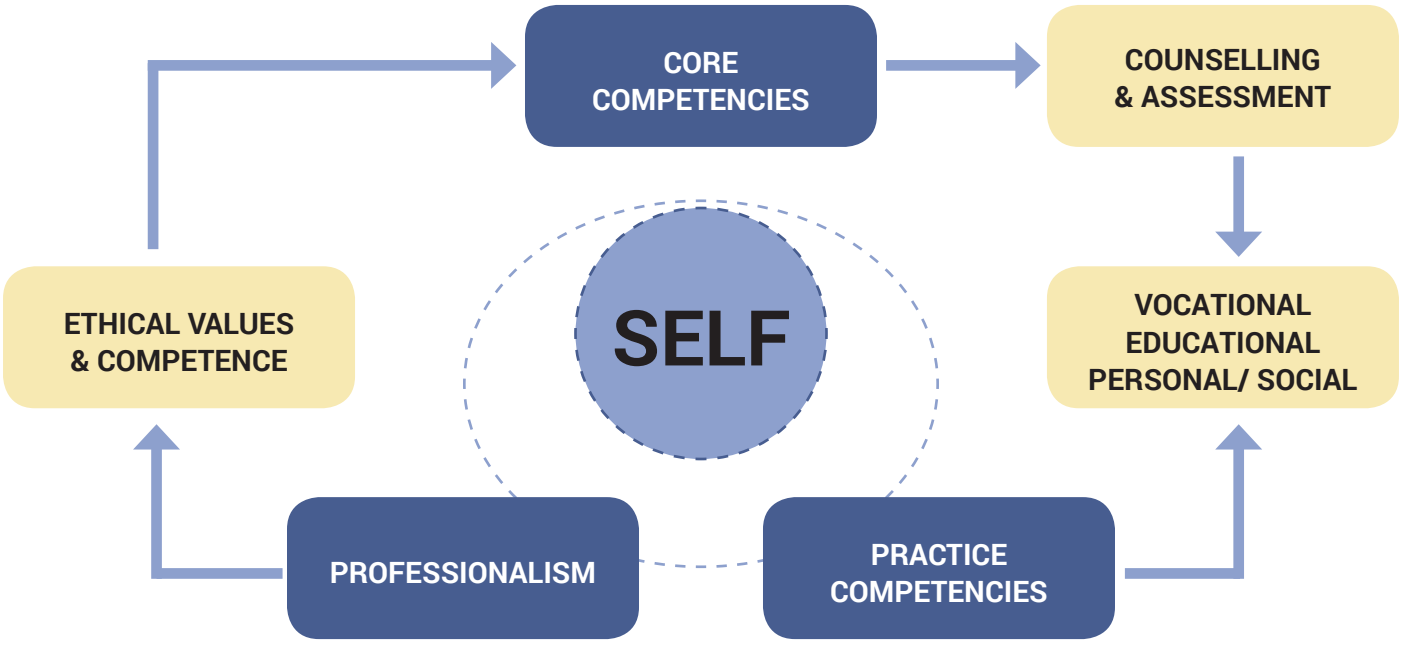


**Figure 1.** The Guidance Counselling Competency Framework

**COMPETENCE**

Competence is the ability to *'identify requirements in complex situations and to solve complex tasks through the activation of specialist knowledge, skills, experiences, feelings, values, interests and motivations, and to act independently and purposefully according to the analysis of the situation. Competence further comprises the ability to (self) critically reflect and assess one's activities regarding the situation and results, in order to learn from future challenges'* [2]

The IGC competency framework describes a dynamic model which sees the self of the guidance counsellor as the central component in the practise of the core professional competencies of guidance counselling. While an essential element is the underpinning theoretical knowledge and the acquisition of the necessary skill base for the development of the core professional and practice competencies, the client – counsellor relationship is central to the work of the guidance professional. The framework is best understood as a feedback loop system in which, following initial generic training and skill development, the professional is engaged in skills acquisition and competency development through CPD, supervision and advanced training in guidance counselling skills, appropriate to the service context.

[2] OECD (2003) Definition and Selection of Key Competencies: Executive Summary. www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/61/35070367.pdf

## The Guidance Counsellor

The basis for competent practice resides in the personal qualities, values and attitudes of the guidance counsellor. Personal and professional maturity is characterized by

- an openness to continuous reflexive exploration of self and practice
- the willingness to commit to ongoing personal and professional development
- an openness to change, to alternative approaches
- an appreciation of difference and diversity
- the ability for independent judgment and responsibility for actions

The capacity to reflect on action, so as to engage in a process of continuous learning, is one of the defining characteristics of professional practice.[3] 'Thinking reflectively …includes reflection *in* and *on* practice' 'an awareness of self in relationship' which enables the guidance counsellor 'to monitor their own reactions to the person and to use this information to build a more effective helping relationship'.[4] In addition, an awareness of the personal, social and cultural contexts in which we live and work, and an understanding of how these contexts impact on the ways we interpret our world are an essential basis for reflexivity.

**Figure 2.** Professional Competence

Developing professional competence is a life-long task, requiring ongoing commitment to the process of personal and professional development. The development of effective practice in guidance counselling depends on the presence of attitudes reflecting openness to alternative approaches, an appreciation of diversity, and a willingness to change.[5]

[3] Schon, Donald. (1983) cited in Atherton J.S. (2013) *Learning and Teaching; Reflection and Reflective Practice* [On-line: UK] retrieved 2 July 2015 from http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/reflecti.htm

[4] Mc Leod, J. (2007) cited in Committee of Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling Competencies For Guidance Counselling Education Programme Interim Guidelines Dublin NCGE (2011)

[5] See, Ibid, (2007)

# Theoretical Knowledge and Skills

Added to the values, attitudes and personal maturity of the self, the underpinning theoretical knowledge and the skills base of the guidance counsellor are both essential components to the acquisition of the core professional and practice competencies in guidance counselling.

| | |
|---|---|
| **COUNSELLING** | **• Theories and Models of Counselling**<br>**• Counselling Skills, Reflexive Practice & Process**<br>**• The Counselling Relationship**<br>**• An Understanding of the Nature of Groups and Group Work** |
| **PERSONAL & SOCIAL CONTEXTS** | • The Psychology of Human Development<br>• Career Development Across the Lifespan<br>• Mental Health, Well Being & Spirituality<br>• Multiculturalism, Social Contexts, Diverse Populations and Work Contexts |
| **ASSESSMENT** | **• Psychometric Tests and Measurement - Principles & Practice**<br>**• Ability, Aptitude Tests**<br>**• Intelligence Variability: MI, EQ, Practical, Entrepreneurial**<br>**• Appropriate Behaviour Assessment Instruments**<br>**• Self -Report Tools - Interest, Personality, Values**<br>**• Qualitative Career Assessment Measures** |
| **EDUCATION** | • Knowledge of Education & Training Pathways<br>• National & International Systems |
| **CONTEXT SPECIFIC PRACTICE** | **• Planning & Implementation**<br>**• Practice Management & Record Keeping**<br>**• Guidance Counselling Processes & Approaches**<br>**• Guidance Counselling Interventions**<br>**• Pre & Post Guidance Counselling Evaluation**<br>**• ICT** |
| **VOCATIONAL** | • Theories of Career Development Across the Lifespan<br>• The Nature of Work<br>• Career Regeneration<br>• Global Perspectives<br>• Career & Labour Market Information<br>• Evaluation and Accountability |
| **PROFESSIONALISM** | **• An Understanding of, and Adherence to, Ethical Practice**<br>**• Further Education and Training**<br>**• Continuous Professional Development**<br>**• An Understanding of Professional Boundaries & Self Care**<br>**• Legislation Relevant to the Practice Context** |

**Figure 3.** Theoretical Knowledge and Skills

## Core Guidance Counselling Competencies

The guidance counsellor engages in a professional, collaborative and holistic way to facilitate clients in their unique identification of strengths, skills, possibilities, resources and options at key developmental milestones through their lifespan in areas relating to personal, social, educational and vocational concerns. Competencies are the core professional knowledge and skills the guidance counsellor brings to bear in his or her work with clients to facilitate the process of guidance counselling.
The core professional competencies in guidance counselling are:

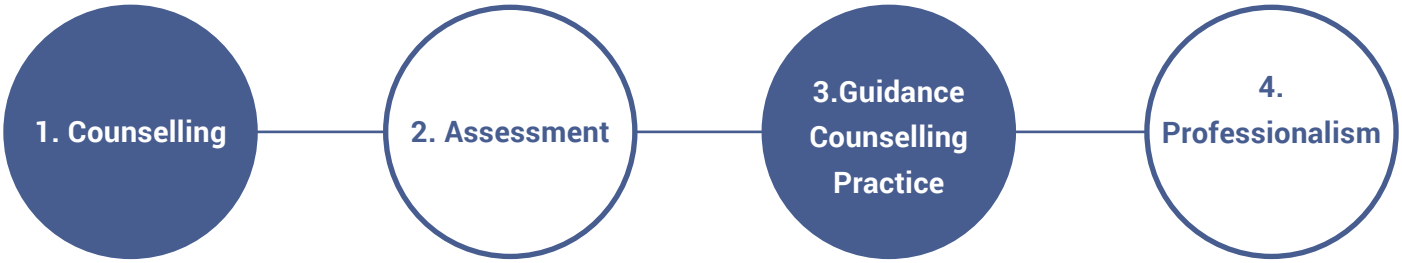

**Figure 4.** The Core Professional Competencies

# Competency Framework Information Sources


- AIOSP. (September 2003) *International Competencies for Educacational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners.* Bern.IAEVG. http://www.iaevg.org/crc/files/iaevg/Competencies-English.pdf
- Career Industry Council of Australia (2006) *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners* Australia: CCIA, Cited in National Guidance Forum Report, 2007
- Committee of Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling (CDSGC) (2011) *Counselling Competencies for Guidance Counselling Education Programmes: Interim Guidelines* Dublin: NCGE
- Herr, Edwin. and Cramer, Stanley. (1996) *Career Guidance and Counselling through the Lifespan,* New York: Harper Collins
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- Laws, Bill., et al. (2002) *New Perspectives on Career and Identity in the Contemporary World.* BJGC, 30 (4)
- McLeod, J. (2007) *Counselling Skills.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.
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# Introduction

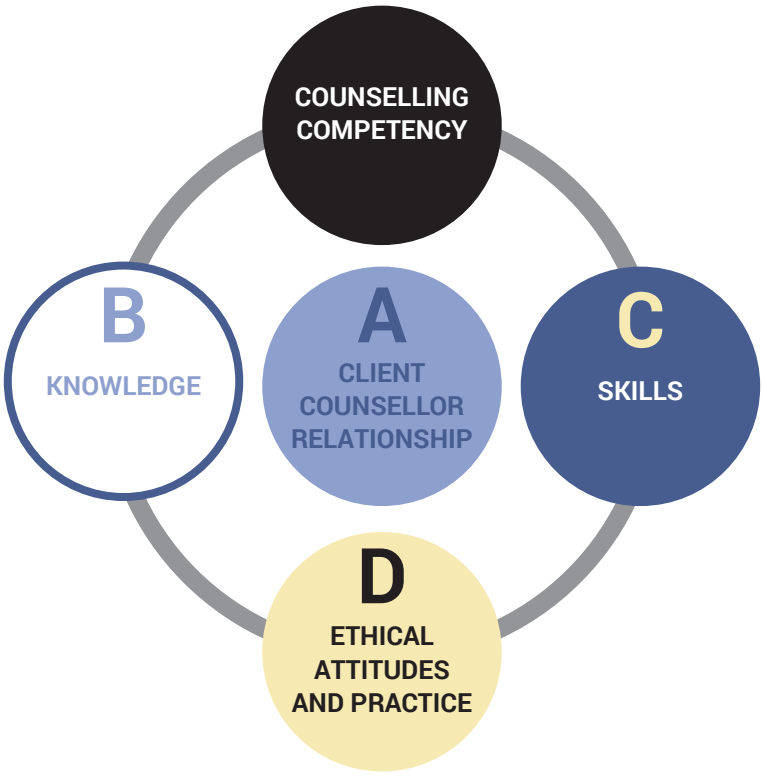


**Figure 5.** Counselling Competency Framework

Guidance counselling involves a collaborative professional relationship to facilitate clients in their unique identification of strengths, skills, possibilities, resources and options at key developmental milestones through their lifespan in areas relating to personal, social, educational and vocational concerns.

The counselling process emphasises the establishment of a strong, empathic, trusting relationship between guidance counsellor and client. This is core to the counsellor's effectiveness in the guidance counselling process. When accurate empathy is combined with genuineness and unconditional positive regard, it provides the ultimate in psychological safety.

The choice of strategies used by a guidance counsellor will depend on professional judgement, the client, the presenting issue, the specific need and the client context. The counselling competency includes cognitive, affective and behavioural components[6]. Personal issues and vocational[7]/educational concerns can present

[6] Ridley, Charles, R., Mollen, Debra., and Kelly, Shannon M. (2011) Beyond Microskills: Toward a Model of Counselling Competence. *The Counselling Psychologist, XX*(X) 1-40. Sage Publications, p.1.

[7] In this document we employ the more encompassing term 'vocational'

concurrently in counselling. It has been argued that it is impossible to separate so distinctly career and personal issues. It is the person and the context, as well as the process and content orientation collectively, that provide the most complete picture of career development.[8]

**'A competency-based approach to guidance counselling', as used in this professional practice outline, refers to standards achieved which can be evaluated. However, these standards must always be interpreted in contexts where guidance counsellors engage with the 'client's whole person and his or her well-being.'[9]**

The counselling competences above at A – D include those identified in the Guidelines for Counselling Competencies drawn up by the Irish Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling[10] many of which, in turn, were built on those identified in the report of the National Guidance Forum.[11]

The guidance counsellor possesses and demonstrates competence in the following four subsets as they relate to the core competence of Counselling: (a) The Counselling Relationship (b) Knowledge, (c) Counselling Skills and (d) Professional and Ethical Attitudes and Practice, with each area further subdivided into specific competences. No element of a competency, however, can be viewed in isolation: each competency qualifies each of the other competencies with each practitioner attempting to achieve a unique integration. These skills and attitudes, and this knowledge base, are considered prerequisites for competent work with clients on personal issues within a guidance counselling context.

Enabling clients to see the world as it is, and empowering them to make their lives richer and more fulfilling, are some of the important challenges of the professional role of the guidance counsellor. 'To make the world a better place for others, that is surely a powerful source of meaning'[12]

[8] Porfeli et al, (2005), *Theories of Career Development: Core Concepts and Propositions,* Connecticut: Information Age Publishing. Cited in Geary, T., and Liston, J., (1993) *The Complexity of Implementing a Guidance Counsellor Education Programme* University of Limerick, p.6.

[9] Committee of Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling, (2011) *Counselling Competencies for Guidance Counselling Education Programmes: Interim Guidelines,* Dublin NCGE, p.4.

[10] Committee of Directors of Studies, OP.CIT. (2011)

[11] National Guidance Forum, (NGF), *Competencies Report, Guidance for Life,* 2007, pp.15-16.

[12] Yalom, Irvin. (2008) *Staring at the Sun,* San Frarncisco: Jossey-Bass p.77.

# A. The Client Counsellor Relationship

***The Guidance Counsellor should seek to exercise the following competencies when working with clients:***

- ***A.1*** Practice in accordance with the Scope of Practice[13]
- ***A.2*** Explain the scope of practice[14] and attend to client's expectations of counselling, including the responsibilities of both the guidance counsellor and client in the counselling relationship
- ***A.3*** Explain confidentiality and its limits, and obtain informed consent where required
- ***A.4*** Contract and set boundaries appropriately
- ***A.5*** Develop the ability and the confidence to establish and maintain a collaborative, congruent and effective relationship with the client, informed by a theoretical framework and world view
- ***A.6*** Demonstrate core conditions of the counselling relationship (empathy, trust, genuineness, unconditional positive regard, acceptance and empowerment)
- ***A.7*** Employ an eclectic and balanced approach to assisting clients while attending to one's own and client's sensations, feelings, thoughts and behaviours
- ***A.8*** Use clear and concise oral communication[15]
- ***A.9*** Demonstrate a range of individual, group counselling and communication skills. Identified as a minimum are the following counselling skills: active listening, clarifying, paraphrasing, setting boundaries, contracting, challenging, focusing, motivating, utilizing non-verbal communication, probing, questioning, reflecting feelings, immediacy, prioritising issues, structuring, summarising a session and reviewing progress[16]
- ***A.10*** Pay attention to the significance of non-verbal communication and respond appropriately

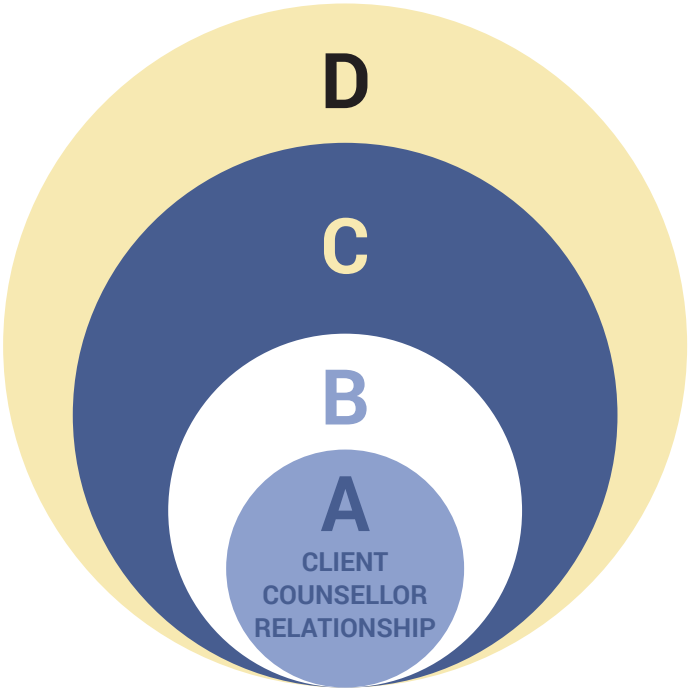


**Figure 6.** The Client Counsellor Relationship

[13] The attention of members is drawn to the IGC Code of Ethics.

[14] See also, Task Group for Counsellor Regulation in British Columbia (2007). *'Scope of Practice'*, cited in National Entry To Practice Competency Profile For Counselling Therapists (3.2a)

[15] Ibid. (2007) (2.1a)

[16] National Guidance Forum, (NGF) Competencies Report, Guidance for Life, 2007 p.15

# 2. CORE GUIDANCE COUNSELLING COMPETENCY

***A.11*** Help clients to change the focus of discourse working from

- **past to present**
- **others to self**
- **facts to feelings and**
- **reflection to appropriate action**

while remaining sensitive to their views regarding what constitutes appropriate change in their lives, enabling analysis and reconfiguration of their situation and then visualising and preparing for any potential difficulties/setbacks

***A.12*** Have the confidence to challenge clients when it is appropriate to do so, and to be challenged in turn

***A.13*** Recognise and manage conflict in the client-guidance counsellor relationship

***A.14*** Reflect on and monitor the quality of the client-guidance counsellor relationship on an ongoing basis

***A.15*** Be able to provide clients with accessible explanations about one's own approach and technique

***A.16*** Demonstrate an ability to appropriately support clients on a range of issues such as bereavement, bullying, health issues, relationship issues, suicide and self-harm, transitional difficulties, stress, personal/sexual identity and peer pressure[17]

***A.17*** Facilitate clients in envisioning their own potential, identifying options,[18] making decisions, resolving difficulties and making a personal plan

***A.18*** Identify and respond to a client's narrative of vulnerabilities, strengths, resilience and resources in a flexible manner

***A.19*** Demonstrate an awareness of, and sensitivity, to the unique familial, social, cultural and economic circumstances of clients and their racial/ethnic, gender, age, physical and learning differences

***A.20*** Be aware when losing ground and take appropriate action such as re-grounding, seeking supervision or referring the client to other professionals

***A.21*** Develop and maintain a referral network[19]

***A.22*** Know when and how to use advocacy on behalf of clients

***A.23*** Recognise when to conclude counselling and facilitate effective closure process

***A.24*** Prepare clients for potential future setbacks and help identify possible follow-up options[20]

[17] See also NGF (2007) for other possible presenting issues

[18] See also Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe, NICE (2015)

[19] Task Group for Counsellor Regulation in British Columbia. *National Entry To Practice Competency Profile For Counselling Therapists.* (2007) 4.8a. p.20

[20] See Ibid, Section 4.9. p.20

# B. Knowledge

***The Guidance Counsellor should seek to possess and integrate knowledge of:***

- ***B.1*** Major theories of counselling and psychotherapy
- ***B.2*** Major theories of the functioning and leadership of experiential groups
- ***B.3*** The theory/theories upon which guidance counselling practice is based[21]
- ***B.4*** Lifespan developmental psychology and its relationship to counselling
- ***B.5*** The main factors underlying personal development through the lifespan
- ***B.6*** Contextual and systemic factors that affect human functioning, including social, biological and family factors
- ***B.7*** Factors affecting wellbeing and distress[22]
- ***B.8*** The nature of human and cultural diversity with reference to such factors as gender, marital/civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, ethnic origin, age, class, gender, ethnicity, levels of ability, language, spirituality, religious belief or lack of belief, educational achievement and sexuality[23]
- ***B.9*** Current professional developments relevant to practice settings

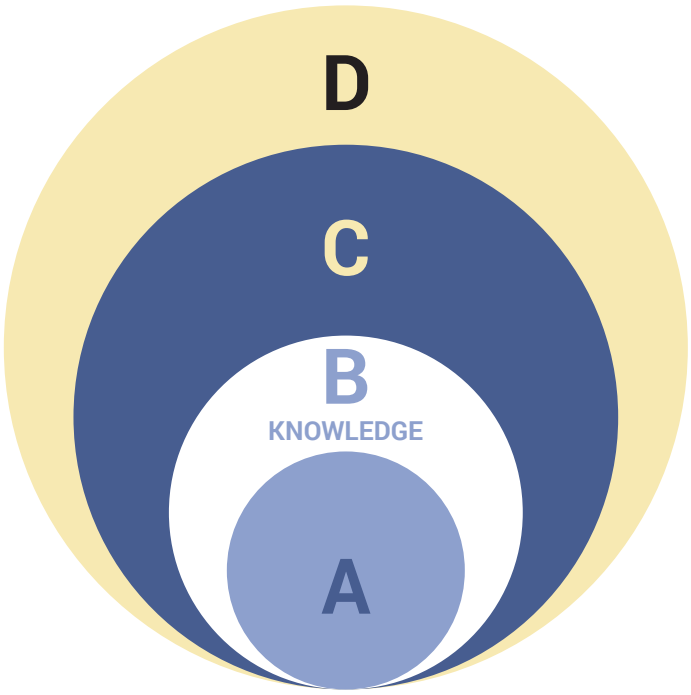


**Figure 7.** Knowledge of Counselling

- ***B.10*** Knowledge of research underlying effective practice in guidance counselling
- ***B.11*** Have the ability to choose the counselling approach that flows from the theoretical framework[24]

[21] See Ibid. section 1.2. p. 8

[22] http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental_Health_Services/NOSP/SuicidePreventionie/suicideselfharm/

[23] See Appendix 6, p.85.

[24] Task Group for Counsellor Regulation in British Columbia (2007) *National Entry To Practice Competency Profile for Counselling Therapists*. (1.2f. p.8)

# C. Counselling Skills

***The Guidance Counsellor should seek to exercise the following competencies in the process of working with clients:***

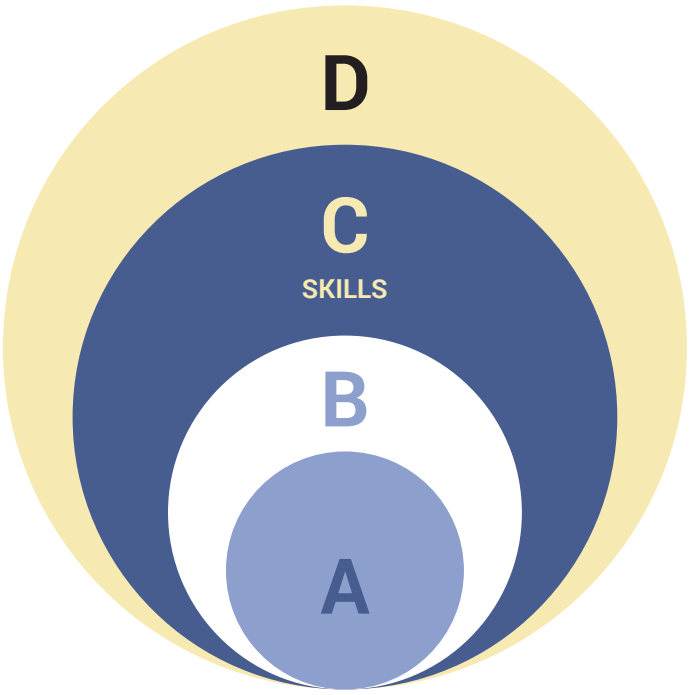


**Figure 8.** Counselling Skills

***C.1*** Employ a mode of counselling, with both individuals and groups, that is based on a framework of counselling theory and lifespan developmental psychology

***C.2*** Work within their level of skill and knowledge in addressing the concerns of clients

***C.3*** Be able to prioritise issues, structure and summarise a session and, review the process of counselling periodically with the client

***C.4*** Facilitate clients in identifying and expanding on existing coping strategies

***C.5*** Monitor progress toward goal

***C.6*** Assist clients to develop self-awareness of their personal values, attitudes, beliefs and self-worth

***C.7*** Enable clients to identify and expand on existing coping strategies

***C.8*** Help clients identify strategies for building self-esteem

***C.9*** Develop an ability to assist individuals and groups to deal with conflict

***C.10*** Take into consideration culturally relevant resources for use with clients

***C.11*** Identify community resources relevant to client needs

***C.12*** Be able to remain grounded in the presence of client distress, including, abuse, anger, depression, fear, grief, shame, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, addiction and self-harm

***C.13*** Assist clients in understanding the impact of stress on emotional and social health and, facilitate them in developing skills for managing it

***C.14*** Evaluate overall outcomes for the client and the practitioner's role in that process

# D. Professional, Ethical Attitude and Practice

***The guidance counsellor should seek to***

***D.1*** Adhere to the *Code of Ethics* of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors

***D.2*** Recognise the professional responsibility of the guidance counsellor to engage with ongoing supervision

***D.3*** Protect client rights and confidentiality in supervision

***D.4*** Demonstrate evidence of evaluating and enhancing one's own counselling practice by engaging in ongoing supervision

***D.5*** Develop a philosophy and implement methods to assess the overall effectiveness of their guidance counselling role

***D.6*** Be open to ongoing reflection and dialogue on their own life journey and its impact on the counselling relationship and have dealt with and, continue to deal with on an ongoing basis, major unresolved / vulnerable / distressing issues in their own lives through appropriate means e.g., counselling / psychotherapy / personal growth work

***D.7*** Take note of the philosophy / mission of the institution where they are working and develop a professional philosophy consistent with this setting

***D.8*** Demonstrate knowledge of the professional standards, policies and practices which govern practice in their work setting

***D.9*** Engage in appropriate continuing professional development on an ongoing basis

***D.10*** Recognise their own personal and professional limitations and act appropriately to seek supervision or professional support

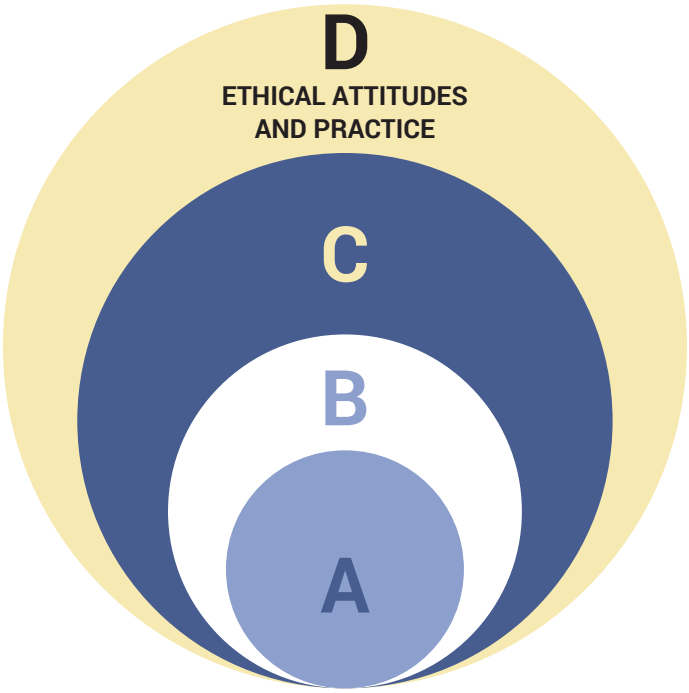


**Figure 9.** Ethical Attitude and Practice

***D.11*** Maintain wellness to support professional performance

***D.12*** Recognise if they are not fit to see clients and desist from practice for an appropriate period

***D.13*** Differentiate the role of the guidance counsellor from that of other professionals while retaining the capacity to work collaboratively with others

***D.14*** Be aware when it is appropriate to refer to more specialised professionals and to do so when (a) the client is significantly disturbed and/or distressed, and/or (b) the counsellor

feels ungrounded or not competent to deal with presenting issues (for example, addiction, anorexia/bulimia, bullying, eating disorders, self-harm, sexual abuse, suicidal ideation, etc.)

***D.15*** Establish secure, effective and ethical systems for maintaining the confidentiality of client records

***D.16*** Follow best practice in note taking, differentiating fact from fiction, avoiding jargon, recording all decisions taken and the basis on which they are made[25]

***D.17*** Establish procedures to deal effectively with client crisis and emergency situations

***D.18*** Resolve ethical dilemmas in a manner consistent with professional standards

***D.19*** Be cognisant of and comply with any legal requirements governing the practice of guidance counselling

# Counselling Competency Information Sources

- Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development (2001) *Core Competencies,* Ottawa, Ontario: National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards

- Career Industry Council of Australia CICA (2011) *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners,* https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/cica_prof_standards_booklet.pdf

- Committee of Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling, (2011) *Counselling Competencies for Guidance Counselling Education Programmes: Interim Guidelines* Dublin: NCGE

- Douglas, Fiona. (2009) *Anyone Can Do Guidance….Losing and Finding Professional Identity in a Complex Chain of Services.* Dunedin, New Zealand: Otago University,. https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/bitstream/handle/123456789/22908/douglas.pdf?sequence=1

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- Hiebert, Bryan., et al. (2001) *Canadian Standards for Career Development Practitioners: Focus on Implementation.* Canada. In Suzin H (ed.) *Natcon Papers 2001.* Toronto, ON: Career Centre, University of Toronto. Available at: http://www.contactpoint.ca/html/natcon-conat.html

[25] See also, *'Record Keeping and Access to Records'* in Part Two, 'Professional Practice Guidelines' of this Document

Hill, Andy. (2010) *The Competences Required to Deliver Effective Counselling for Depression.* U.K: British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy www.ucl.ac.uk/CORE.

Inskipp, Francesca. (1996) *Skills Training for Counselling,* London: Cassell.

McMahon, Mary. (1997) for CICA, *Moving Forward - Shaping a Career Development Culture; Quality Standards, Quality Practice, Quality Outcomes,* National Standards & Accreditation of Career Practitioners Project (NSACPP) Australia, Department of Education, Science and Training http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536208.pdf

National Guidance Forum (2007) *A Competency Framework for Guidance Practitioners.* Dublin: NGF

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National Guidance Forum for Education, Career and Employment, Universitat Heidelberg (2012) *Quality and Professionalism in Career Guidance and Counselling - The Open Process of Coordination for Quality Development in Career Guidance in Germany* (2009-2012) Berlin/Heidelberg: Sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

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Task Group for Counsellor Regulation in British Columbia (2007) *National Entry-To-Practice Competency Profile For Counselling Therapists,* British Columbia, Canada

Transparent Competencies in Europe TRACE (2005) - *Overview of European Competency Frameworks,* Leonardo da Vinci Project

Yalom, Irvin. (2008) *Staring at the Sun,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

# Introduction

Assessment is central to the role of the guidance counsellor in supporting the client in his or her identification and integration of personal characteristics, current values, strengths and skills in the exploration of personal, educational or occupational goals. Testing, as an assessment tool in guidance counselling, has as its primary goal the acquisition of relevant information and the reporting of that information, with appropriate interpretations, to assist the client in making important career decisions.

Testing refers to any '…evaluative device or procedure in which a sample of examinee's behaviour in a specified domain is obtained and subsequently evaluated and scored using a standardised process'.[26]

Counsellor insight and the integration of all sources of data and information, supports the client in self exploration and the decision making process. Many interventions are possible in discerning client characteristics, some of which are illustrated below. It is recommended that guidance counsellors employ a variety of tools in the assessment of an individual's characteristics to ensure reliability of evidence. Tests are, therefore, used alongside other sources of information to support the guidance counselling process.

Practice contexts and the guidance counsellor's judgment of client need, will influence the choice of both the instrument and the assessment procedure. These may include formal and/or informal instruments and tests to

**help support the assessment process by providing objective client data which can be verified against other valid sources of information and biographical input from the client**

↓

**support client insight which might not otherwise come to light and alert the guidance counsellor to relevant information of which the client may not currently be aware**

↓

**provide a more accurate and rounded picture of the individual client where data is derived from multiple sources**

[26] American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association & National Council on Measurement in Education, *Standards*, (1999) p.3. For the most recent updates in *Standards* (2014) see http://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/index.aspx

# 3. CORE GUIDANCE ASSESSMENT COMPETENCY

The use of tests as a tool in the assessment process in guidance counselling requires an appreciation of their limitations, an understanding that 'the validity and reliability of any test is less than perfect'[27]. Guidance counsellors are required to maintain their assessment competencies through training and regular CPD. They adhere to the registered qualified test user guidelines of the psychometric accrediting body and to the Code of Ethics of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors. Test interpretation is always a challenge and expertise develops with knowledge and experience. The more familiar a guidance counsellor becomes with a particular test, the better he or she will be with regard to the provision of important data. It is important to accentuate as many positives as possible.

Careful interpretation involves a consideration of all of the sub-test results, how the client participated in the test process, as well as other factors such as the health of the client, cultural background, motivation and enthusiasm. In institutional settings, test interpretation should take place on an individual basis, with the guidance counsellor drawing on their counselling skills training, e.g., establishing empathy, doing a 'positive assets search' in relation to abilities, aptitudes and interests, if at all possible. A discussion of the notion of multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence can be revelatory. With the adolescent client it is a good idea to ask a student to explain to the guidance counsellor his/her interpretation of the test results in order to ascertain that the information presented has been understood.

**With regard to report writing it is important that these are short and succinct. At times, the guidance counsellor may be asked to write a report for the courts or the HSE. It is imperative to avoid jargon, to place the test results in context and take care not to draw conclusions which may be outside one's area of competence. Suggested headings for report writing include: Name and Address; Date of Birth; Date of Testing; Reason for Testing; Results; Background Information; Conclusions and Recommendations.**

Guidance counsellors are responsible for the security of testing instruments and the safeguarding of derived client information. It is recommended that guidance counsellors, particularly those who work in educational and other institutional settings, take responsibility for formulating a policy document in relation to the proper and appropriate use of psychometric instruments within the institution in the context of their professional work as guidance counsellors[28].

[27] Tyler, Leona E. and Walsh, W. Bruce. (1979) *Tests and Measurements* 3rd Ed. New Jersey, Prentice Hall, p.120

[28] See Appendix 2, p.77

# Assessment Interventions

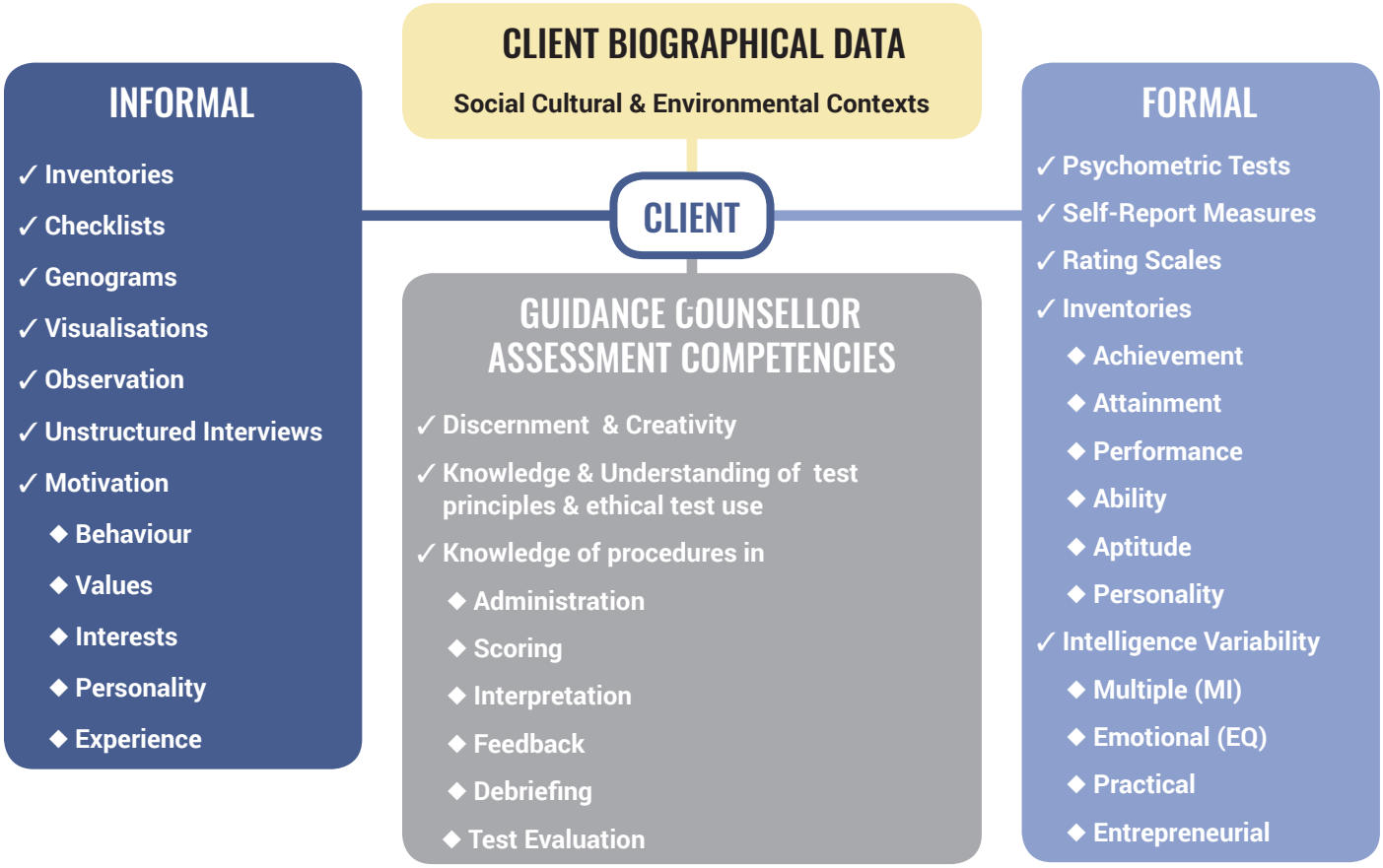


**Figure 10.** Assessment competencies, knowledge and skills

## 2. I FORMAL AND INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

- **Formal assessment**[29] is concerned with measuring individual differences and makes use of two broad categories of instrument: **psychometric & self report measures**
- **Psychometric tests** of individual difference, such as ability, aim to measure client potential in specific areas, such as verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning
- **Self report measures** assess personal qualities or traits such as personality, interests and motivation. Self reports are intended to help develop the client's self awareness

Both ability and self-report instruments aim to measure systematically individual differences so reasonable inferences can be made about likely future behaviour.

- **Informal Assessment** techniques are subjective and qualitative and present the client with space to uncover personal, educational and life themes.

[29] See Appendix 2, p.68, for sources of information in relation to testing and a list of suppliers of 'Psychometric' Tests, 'Self Report Measures' and other instruments.

- Data derived from the personal patterns and meanings which clients attach to their experience aims to assist the construction of personal, educational and vocational decisions.

Equal concern for client welfare is called for in employing *informal* assessment. The International Test Commission (ITC) states that the guidelines *'...will apply also to other assessment procedures that lie outside the domain of 'tests'. They may be relevant for any assessment procedure that is used in situations where the assessment of people has a serious and meaningful intent and which, if misused, may result in personal loss or psychological distress.'*

## 2. II COUNSELLOR ASSESSMENT COMPETENCIES

Guidance counsellors use formal and informal assessment instruments, mindful at all times of the needs of the client, and assess the advantages and disadvantages of using tests compared with other sources of information. In establishing appropriate assessment procedures to meet client needs, guidance counsellors adhere to the IGC Code of Ethics and practice in accordance with the registered qualified test user guidelines of the accrediting body. The International Test Commission (ITC) Guidelines for Test Use describe a competent test user as one who will *'use tests appropriately, professionally and, in an ethical manner, paying due regard to the rights of those involved in the testing process, the reasons for the testing and, the broader context in which the testing takes place. This outcome will be achieved by ensuring that the test user has the necessary competencies to carry out the testing process, and the knowledge and understanding of tests and test use that inform and underpin this process.'*[30]

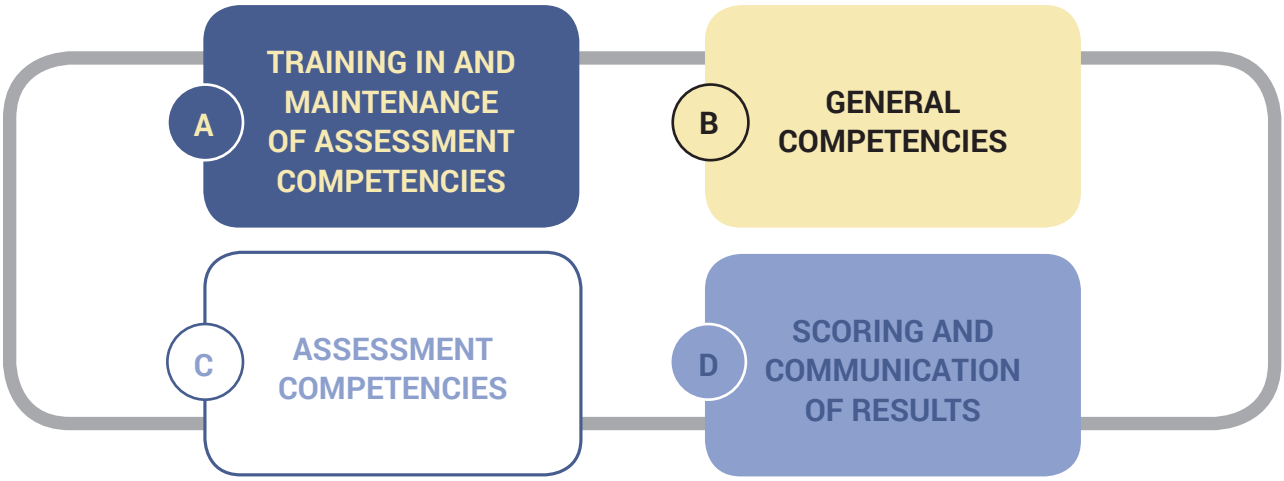


**Figure 11.** Guidance Counselling Assessment Competencies

[30] International Test Commission (2001) *International Guidelines for Test* Use, International Journal of Testing, 1(2), pp. 93-94.

**2. III TESTING COMPETENCY GUIDELINES**

The following outline guidelines are sourced from the British Psychological Society, the American Psychological Association, the Psychological Society of Ireland and the International Test Commission (ITC) Guidelines. Guidance counsellors are encouraged to regularly review the ITC website, along with their own psychometric accrediting professional body's information and IGC guidelines in relation to professional practice.

# A. Training In and Maintenance of Competence

***A.1*** Guidance counsellors ensure that they meet all standards of competence for the relevant qualification in test use as defined by the accrediting body, the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) and/or the British Psychological Society (BPS)

***A.2*** Ensure that they have undertaken the mandatory training and that they have the knowledge, understanding, skills and technical requirements to engage in testing

***A.3*** Use only those psychometric instruments which lie within the limits of their competence and have obtained the appropriate training for each of the instruments they use

***A.4*** Maintain and develop their competence through regular CPD, including information about developments in testing instruments and changes in legislation and policy impacting on testing and test use

***A.5*** Implement an explicit policy on test use, to include information relevant to Data Protection, relevant to the contexts in which they practice

# B. General Competencies

***B.1*** Guidance counsellors accept responsibility for maintaining the integrity of tests by ensuring secure storage and control of access to testing materials, respecting copyrights laws, not transmitting tests electronically or to unqualified third parties, and by not coaching individuals on test materials

***B.2*** Accept responsibility for appropriate confidentiality in relation to disclosure of information about test performance to third parties, mindful of other personal, environmental, psychosocial factors which may impact on performance

***B.3*** Accept responsibility for, and ensure the interpretation of, test results according to best practice

***B.4*** Consult with other professionals, as appropriate, who are involved with clients who have a specific disability, regarding the appropriateness of instruments and procedures

# C. Assessment Administration Competencies

*C.1* Guidance counsellors inform test takers about the purpose of the test, the limits relating to access of results by third parties, and where applicable, obtain informed consent from the client or the client's parents/guardians.

*C.2* Establish that the assessment instruments or techniques are appropriate to assess the knowledge, skills, abilities, aptitudes, behaviours or other characteristics intended to meet client needs

*C.3* In deciding appropriate assessment strategies, accept responsibility for the choice of test, instrument or technique and evaluate critically each type of instrument for validity evidence, reliability and appropriate population norms.

*C.4* Take responsibility for all necessary practical arrangements in relation to a satisfactory testing venue, a quiet and safe testing environment, sufficient testing materials, and thorough advance preparation of materials and instructions

*C.5* Administer tests with regard to the welfare and satisfactory participation of the test taker

*C.6* Adhere strictly to the directions and instructions contained in the test manual

# D. Scoring and Communication of Results

*D.1* Guidance counsellors follow standardized procedures for scoring, with due care to accuracy of norms

*D.2* Best ethical practice requires, regardless of time constraints, that initial feedback be one to one, in private, or with a third party where appropriate, in a constructive and supportive manner, mindful of other psycho-educational, social and personal factors which may affect performance

*D.3* Communicate results clearly and accurately in the form of an oral or a written report, appropriate to the context, for client or relevant interested parties with client consent, with due attention to an appropriate language register[31]

### 2. IV SECURITY OF TEST MATERIAL

It is imperative that all Guidance Counsellors, and particularly those who work collaboratively with others, observe complete security of test material. Colleagues not qualified in psychometric testing may find it difficult to understand why sight of test materials, documentation and test results is restricted. The following from the American Psychological Association on the disclosure of test data throws light on this issue:

*'Availability of test items to an unqualified person can not only render the test invalid for any future use with that individual, but also jeopardises the security and integrity of the test for other persons who may be exposed to test items and*

[31] Please see Appendix 4, p.71, for BPS information on Communicating Test Results - Guidelines for Test User

*responses. Such release imposes very concrete harm to the general public – loss of effective assessment tools. The existence of limited number of standardized psychological tests appropriate for a given purpose (in some instances only a single instrument), means they cannot easily be replaced or substituted if an individual obtains prior knowledge of item content or the security of the test is otherwise compromised. Development and refinement of items and norms for individual intelligence tests, personality assessment techniques, and achievement tests often require many years of research and considerable effort and expense. Improper disclosure of test items or other test materials also may result in damage to those parties which have developed or have ownership of the test and result in breach of contract claims against …' guidance counsellors 'who violate the terms of their test purchase or lease agreements.'*[32]

Guidance counsellors must also adhere to such standards in the rare event that they are called upon to give written or oral statements or opinion to a court. 'The general nature of a given test may be explained to the courts without disclosing specific details of test content which compromise its subsequent use.'[33]

In an organisational setting where test results have traditionally been included in a file/open storage system containing other information about a person, whether a minor or not, and where such file and storage system is on open access to fellow colleagues not trained in test use, policy needs to include a rationale for this restricted access.

## Assessment Section Information Sources

- American Psychological Association, (1996) *Statement on the Disclosure of Test Data: Release of Data and Test Security.* American Psychological Association Committee on Psychological Tests and Assessment, p.4.

- American Psychological Association (1985/1999) *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (pp.55-58) Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. For the most recent updates in *Standards* (2014) see http://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/index.aspx

- American School Counselor Association. 21st September (1998) & Association for Assessment in Counselling, 10th September, (1998) *Competencies in Assessment and Evaluation for School Counselors.* British Psychological Society, Psychological Testing Centre (2007) *Statement on the Conduct of Psychologists Providing Expert Psychometric Evidence to Courts and Lawyers* British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP)

[32] *Statement on the Disclosure of Test Data: Release of Data and Test Security.* American Psychological Association Committee on Psychological Tests and Assessment, (1996), p.4 para.V.,

[33] *Statement on the Conduct of Psychologists providing Expert Psychometric Evidence to Courts and Lawyers,* Psychological Testing Centre, British Psychological Society, (2007), p.3

- British Psychological Society, Committee on Tests Standards, (2010) *Code of Good Practice for Psychological Testing.* Approved by the BPS Membership Standards Board
- British Psychological Society, *Code of Good Practice for Psychological Testing* (2016) (Updated) https://ptc.bps.org.uk/ptc/guidelines-and-information
- British Psychological Society, Psychological Testing Centre. www.psychtesting.org.uk
- British Psychological Society, Psychological Testing Centre. *Psychological Testing: A User's Guide.* www.psychtesting.org.uk Information on different types of tests for the test user.
- British Psychological Society, PTC Psychological Testing: A Test Takers Guide https://ptc.bps.org.uk/ptc/guidelines-and-information Information on the testing process for the test taker.
- British Psychological Society, (2016) *Communicating Test Results: Guidance for Test Users* https://ptc.bps.org.uk/blog/new-guidelines-test-users
- Data Protection Act, 1988, amended 2003 http://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/LAW-ON-DATA-PROTECTION/795.htm
- Fitzgerald, Declan. & Farrell, Ciara. *Best Practice, Ethical and Legal Considerations in Psychometric Testing for Guidance Counsellors.* School Guidance Handbook, p.7 Dublin: NCGE http://schoolguidancehandbook.ncge.ie/document-detail/Best-Practice-Ethical-and-Legal Considerations-in-Psychometric-Testing-for-Guidance-Counsellors/39
- Hearne, Dr Lucy. (2013). *Ethical Research in Guidance Counselling.* Dublin: NCGE http://schoolguidancehandbook.ncge.ie/document-detail/Ethical-Research-in-Guidance-Counselling/4
- International Test Commission (ITC) *Guidelines on Test Use* http://www.intestcom.org/Guidelines/Test+Use.php
- Savikas, M. L. (1996) *Career Construction Theory* http://www.vocopher.com/pdfs/careerconstruction.pdf
- Savickas, M. L., et al. (2009) Life designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2009.04.004 http://scholar.google.com/scholar_url?url=http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/70983503/2046355320/name/Life%25252520designing%28ENG%29.pdf&hl=en&sa=X&scisig=AAGBfm0VO3g8m3cBViXnw9wxAiYYpNhpBg&nossl=1&oi=scholarr
- Tyler, Leona E., and Walsh, W.Bruce. (1979) *Tests and Measurements,* 3rd Ed., New Jersey: Prentice Hall

# Introduction

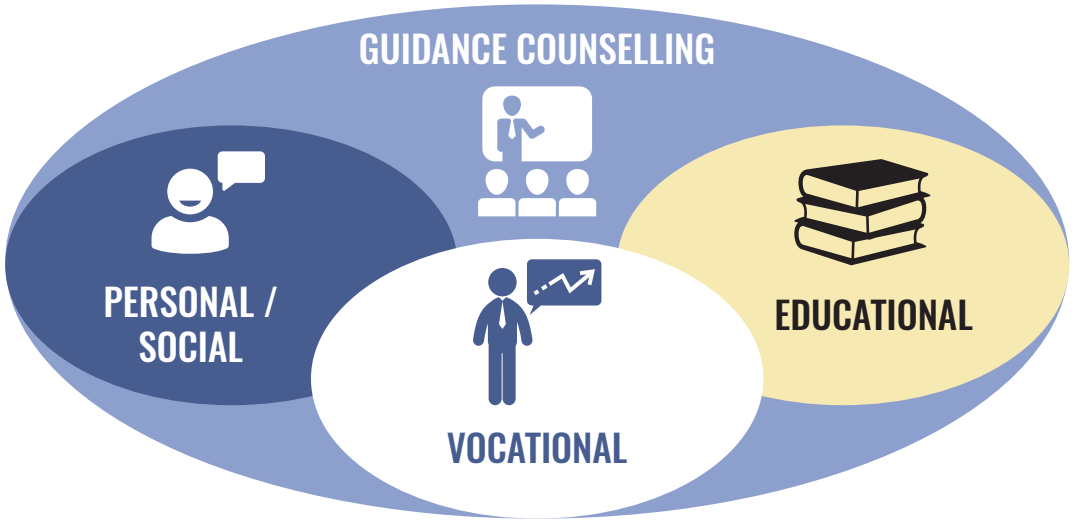


**Figure 12.** Guidance Counselling Practice: Personal/Social, Educational, Vocational

This section addresses the delivery and practice of a holistic model of guidance counselling and integrates the core competencies of counselling and assessment, underpinning the guidance counsellor's role in the practice of personal, social, educational and vocational[34] guidance counselling.

Whilst the central aspect of early vocational guidance was to provide and support career decisions,[35] contemporary guidance counselling practice in some jurisdictions now embodies the three distinct, but overlapping areas of personal/social, educational and vocational counselling.[36] When the presenting issue is one of choosing an educational course or a vocational path, the approach taken by the practitioner encompasses the personal and social as well as the educational/vocational needs of the person.

Good educational and/or vocational decisions, integrates the client's personal values, attitudes and beliefs, as well as relevant external, environmental and social factors. Where clients are unaware of their own values, attitudes and beliefs, guidance counsellors assist clients in becoming aware of and addressing these as a precursor to making valid choices. Guidance counsellors facilitate clients in addressing personal and emotional blocks, which may hinder the process of vocational and educational development and decision making.

[34] In this document we have adopted the term'vocational' as opposed to the narrower term 'career'.

[35] Savickas, Mark L. (2008) Cited in *Handbook of Career Development: International Perspectives,* Arulmani, Gideon., Bakshi, Anuradha J., Leong. Frederick. T.L., and Watts, Anthony. (Eds.) New York: Springer, 2014.

[36] Hearne, L. and Galvin, J. (2014) The role of the regular teacher in a whole school approach to guidance counselling in Ireland, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling,* (BJGC) Volume 43 (2). Routledge Taylor and Francis.

# 4. CORE GUIDANCE PRACTICE COMPETENCY

The practice of guidance counselling recognises that development occurs throughout the life span and that each period is characterised by its own developmental tasks, values, needs and interests'[37]

> *There are significant individual differences in an individual pupil's capacity to identify, source and interpret information concerning themselves and future learning and work opportunities, family and societal expectations, and to make choices. There are also significant differences in the pace of development of young people's intellectual, emotional, social and career decision-making maturity in both childhood and teen-age years. The majority of them need some lifelong guidance support over the course of their schooling; a significant minority needs a lot of support with learning and work choices.*[38]

It is clear that vocational development is linked to identity formation. The picture we have of ourselves, or, our self-concept, plays a major role in career choice and changes with time and experience, making choice and adjustment a continuous process.[39] Practice also takes account of the relational, spiritual, ecological and moral issues that underpin our life choices; the guidance counsellor remains open to questioning the underlying economic, political and social assumptions to help create a more inclusive world view.[40]

Career is thus a continual developmental process of compromise and synthesis within which the self- concept operates. The notion of career as a process with multiple decision points is key to Super's understanding of career development which he sees 'enmeshed in a complexity of life roles and transitions'. Personal redefinitions occur again and again; there are shifting paradigms and shifting emphases throughout the lifespan, what Super termed as 'series of mini-cycles encompassed in maxi-cycles'.[41] Life then is a series of new and different transitions and knowing when one transition ends and a new one begins will be an important intrapersonal skill in this current career and work paradigm.[42]

**The 'shelf life' of work skills is getting shorter and shorter; learning and regeneration must surely be seen as the new work.**[43]

Jung likened the lifecycle to the arc of the sun on the horizon during the course of the day. He considered that each season of life has its own particular character, value and developmental task. The first two quarters of life are essentially biographical and social, and those of the third and final quarters, middle adulthood and old age, essentially cultural and spiritual.[44] Jung and Super did much to offer a holistic view of development from the cradle to the grave.

[37] See, O Rourke, Dr Michael L., (2015) Life-Span Development and Career Interventions,. *Guideline* 45 (1) Oct

[38] European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network ELGPN (2015) Tools No 6. *Guidelines for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance: A Reference Framework for the E.U. and for the Commission.* University of Jyvaskyla, Finland, p30

[39] O Rourke, Dr. Michael L., (2015) Life-Span Development and Career Interventions, *Guideline,* 45 (1) Oct.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Quoted in O'Rourke, 2015

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Jung, C.G. (1963) *Memories, Dreams and Reflections'* London: Routledge pp.78-80

# Vocational Guidance Counselling

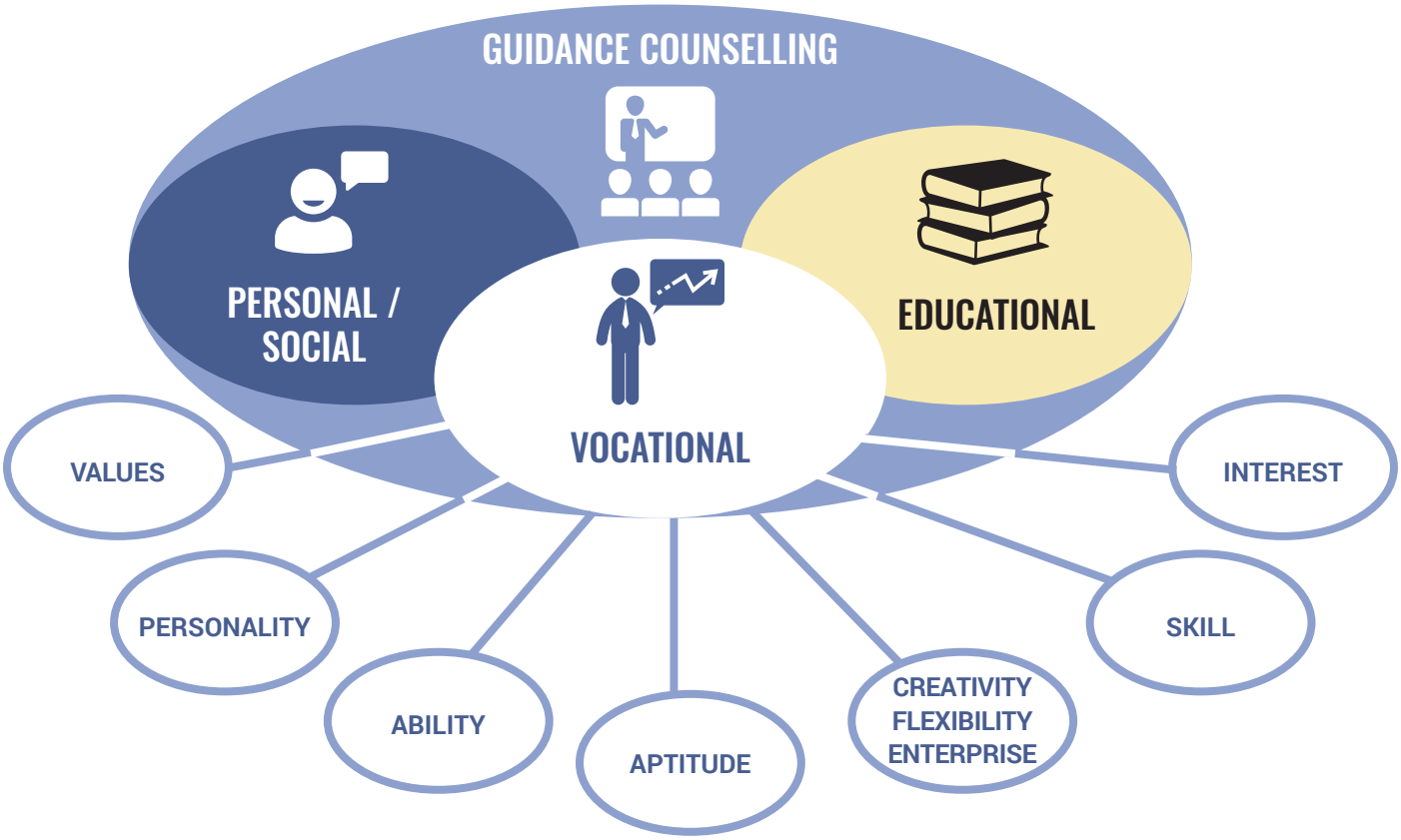


**Figure 13.** Guidance Counselling – Vocational Context

*'There is a paradigm shift in the conceptualisation of career. In the labour market a career is not chosen, it is constructed through a series of choices we make throughout our lives'*[45]

Future directions for the practice of guidance counselling in Ireland are arising from current policy shifts and work transformations. Four trends, in particular, at the time of writing, are shaping the contemporary world of work: automation,[46] [47] globalisation, casualisation and collaborative work practices. These trends present opportunities and challenges for career options.[48] As well as leading to more creative, independent and meaningful work, they

[45] Vuorinen, Raimo, (2015) *Navigating the Horizon,* Dublin, NCGE

[46] https://www.technologyreview.com/s/515926/how-technology-is-destroying-jobs/

[47] http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21594264-previous-technological-innovation-has-always-delivered-more-long-run-employment-not-less

[48] IGC (2013) *Current Trends and Future Directions for the Practice of Guidance Counselling- Vision for the Future of Guidance Counselling in Ireland* pp. 4-5, p.12.

also present risks leading to unemployment, inequality and job insecurity in traditional employment sectors.[49] A key finding regarding the future of employment will be the necessity for flexibility, resilience, collaboration, enterprise and creativity as core attitudes and skills.[50] An occupation for the entire working life is increasingly being replaced by a sequence of complex choices over a longer lifetime of learning and work[51] involving flexibility, current skills reassessment and retraining, as well as an increase in work based learning and intensive skills training programmes.[52]

Contemporary paradigm shifts in the understanding of vocational development, understands career as not chosen, but rather created through a series of choices throughout the lifespan.[53] Vocational development is a life-long process with multiple decision points interwoven with personal development, 'enmeshed in a complexity of life roles and transitions.'[54] Career development is an effective way to help clients to become lifelong learners and successful employees. It includes

> *'…the experiential learning, supports, information and instruction students need to develop life–building skills and resilience, to be intentional learners, to proactively manage career choices and transitions and to be architects of their preferred futures'.*[55]

In vocational guidance, guidance counsellors employ the core competencies of counselling and assessment to assist clients identify strengths, interests, aptitudes, values, abilities, skills and personality factors which influence career decision making.

***Key interventions include assisting clients to***

- recognise transferrable skills and identify present skills deficit
- source and use occupational information
- develop career decision-making and career management skills[56]
- author and review a specific career plan
- source current opportunities and vocational and educational training pathways
- identify when one transition ends and a new one begins

[49] Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) (2015) *The New Work Order – Ensuring young Australians have skills and expertise for the jobs of the future not the past* - Prepared by AlphaBeta, p.17.

[50] UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2014) *Future of Work: Jobs and Skills in 2030* Evidence Report 84. U.K: University of South Wales. p.37

[51] National *Guidance Forum (2007) Guidance for Life: An Integrated Framework for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland,* p12.

[52] Ibid, p. 47.

[53] O'Rourke, Dr, Michael L., (2015) *Lifespan Development and Career Interventions,* Guideline 45 (1) Oct.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Council Of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, *Future in Focus, Atlantic Career Development Framework for Public Education,* 2015-2020 Council Of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training.

[56] NICE: Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling. (2012) *Handbook for the Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professionals,* Heidelberg: Heidelberg University, p.66

# Knowledge

*1.1* Policy, research and professional guidelines related to vocational guidance, including lifelong transversal guidance policy guidelines[57]

*1.2* Theories of vocational/career development across the lifespan and the application of the theories in career life planning[58]

*1.3* The range and purpose of psychometric tests used to support career planning[59]

*1.4* Career developmental issues and the dynamics of vocational behaviour[60]

*1.5* Client engagement techniques from eclectic sources

*1.6* Relevant regulation, legislation and cultural norms in relation to vocational guidance interventions, whether on behalf of oneself or the client

*1.7* National and local referral services and agencies assisting the job-search process

*1.8* Occupations and professions, to include work tasks and functions; skills requirements and pathways to entry

*1.9* Career planning materials and computer/internet-based career information systems and other online resources to assist career planning[61]

*1.10* Employment trends and labour market information[62]

*1.11* Skills transferability and mobility pathways

*1.12* Opportunities and challenges of global citizenship

*1.13* Career Management Skills (CMS) in a range of competencies, (knowledge, skills and attitudes) which provide structured ways for individuals and groups at any stage of development to collect, analyse, sythesise and interpret information on oneself, on learning and work pathways and on occupations, as well as the skills to make and interpret decisions and transitions arising from this information[63]

[57] European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) (2007-2015) *Guidelines for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance,* ELGPN Tools, No 6 (2015) http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/elgpn-tools-no-6-guidelines-for-policies-and-systems-development-for-lifelong-guidance

[58] National Guidance Forum (2007) *Guidance for Life. An Integrated Framework for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland.*

[59] Ibid. (2007)

[60] Ibid. (2007)

[61] ELGPN Tools, No 6, Guideline 9: *Information and Communications Technology in Lifelong Guidance,* pp.26-28

[62] EGFSN Expert Group on Future Skills Needs www.skillsireland.ie

[63] ELGPN (2015) The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network *Designing and Implementing Policies related to Career Management Skills,* p.21

## Practice

*1.14* Assist in identifying the influencing factors (e.g. values, attributes, skills, family, friends, educational, financial, socio-economic factors and biased attitudes that stereotype others by gender, race, age, and culture) which influence vocational decision-making

*1.15* Fostering attitudes, beliefs, and competencies that facilitate the client's mastery of vocational development tasks: adapt, acquire new skills, the ability to plan, set goals and identify strategies to make work role transitions over the life span

*1.16* Facilitate the client in understanding career transitions and working through the multiple stressors of transition that may be encountered at different stages through the lifespan

*1.17* Support and challenge clients to examine life work roles[64], including life-work balance

*1.18* Select assessment strategies appropriate to training and to one's practice and context

*1.19* Willingness to challenge 'one's own biases' and practice in the dissemination of career information with clients from differing ethnic, cultural, gender, age backgrounds[65]

*1.20* Ability to source, adapt and design career resources to meet the needs of specific populations

*1.21* Support clients in developing their career management skills and ability to source opportunities

*1.22* Use 'advocacy', where appropriate, with colleagues and other professionals, to further 'the advancement of clients learning and career development'[66]

[64] National Career Development Association, USA (1997) *Career Counselling Competencies,* p.4.

[65] NICE, (2012) Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling, *Academic Training Manual,* Heidelberg University, p.69

[66] International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners, IAEVG (2003) *International Competencies* C2 , p.1. www.iaevg.org/crc/files/CQS-Final%20Report-draft%208111.do

***1.23*** 'Help clients to source, interpret and apply labour market information at local, national and international level to achieve their career objectives'[67]

***1.24*** Be aware of and establish links 'with other specialist services and refer clients to these services when appropriate'[68]

***1.25*** Facilitate clients in job finding, and accessing training opportunities[69]

***1.26*** Facilitate client's engagement in community based or experiential learning

***1.27*** Uses information technology to support practice and to develop, maintain and review information management strategies in order to provide up to date vocational, personal/ social and educational information[70]

*"ICT applications range from career and labour market information files and telephone support to sophisticated online web-assisted guidance systems, resources and tools, to apps, 3D multiuser virtual environments, and distance services, and to social media sites that facilitate interaction between citizens and guidance practitioners and between the users themselves. These latter include: peer to peer coaching, online career support communities, job seeker and employer connections, and user driven real time mentoring. Experiencing career options through gaming and apps (e.g. job search and job networking), can provide instant signposting to next step researching/information discovery. ICT applications also include national portals[71] linking the lifelong guidance work of several ministries which share this policy responsibility.[72]"*

[67] National Guidance Forum (2007) *Guidance for life: An Integrated Framework for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland.*

[68] National Guidance Forum (2007) Ibid.

[69] NICE (2015), Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling *The European Competencies Standards for Career Professionals and Career Advisors,* (Final Draft).

[70] National Guidance Forum (2007) *Guidance for Life. An Integrated Framework for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland.*

[71] www.careersportal.ie/www.qualifax.ie/

[72] ELGPN (2015) Tools No 6 ( Guideline 9) *Information and Communications Technology in Lifelong Guidance* University of Lyvaskyla Finland, p. 26.

# PERSONAL/SOCIAL GUIDANCE COUNSELLING

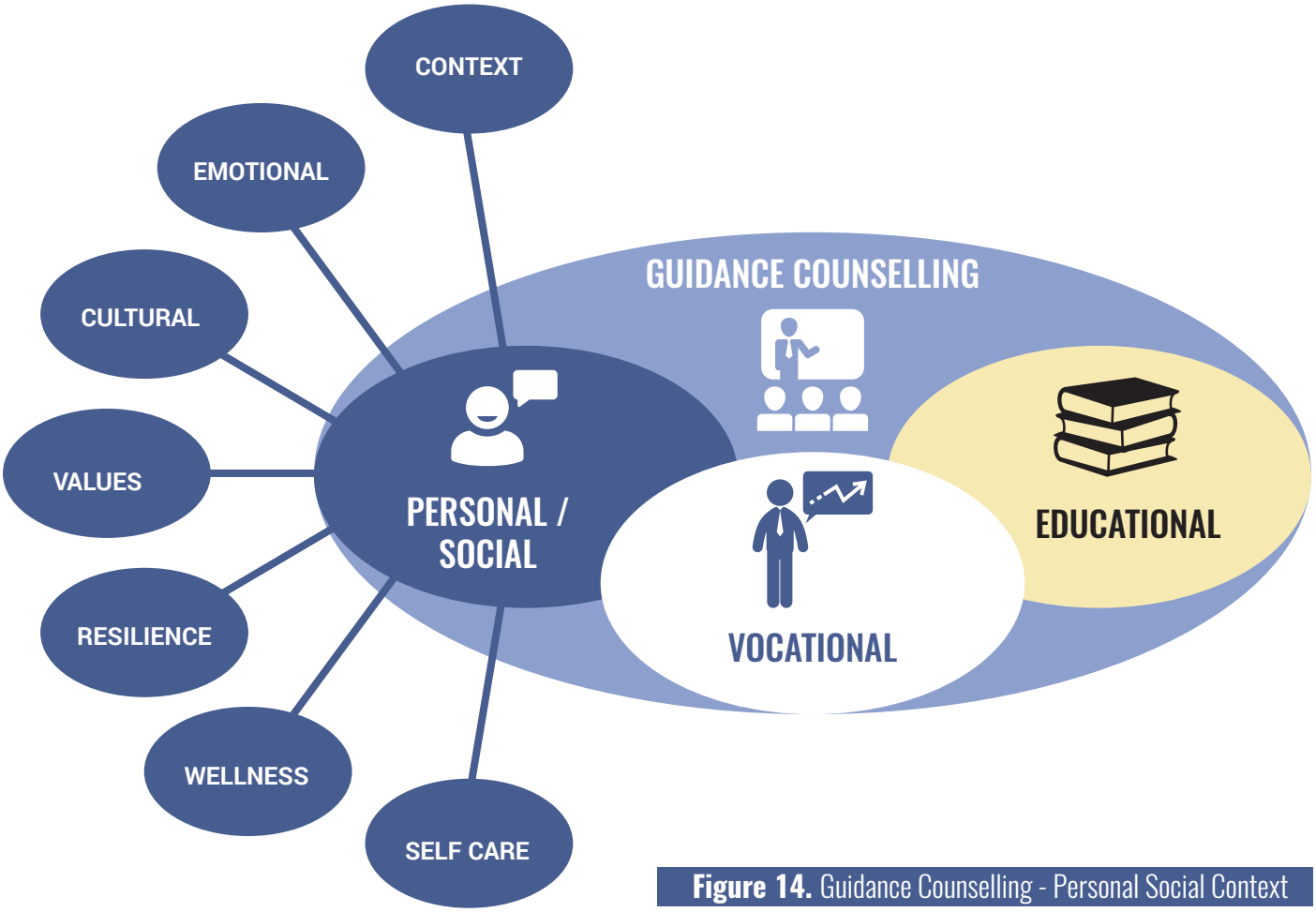


**Figure 14.** Guidance Counselling - Personal Social Context

The design and delivery of guidance counselling services are not value free and practitioners bring a set of personal values to their work. Much of what we learn is through contexts that include cultural beliefs, values, and our world views.[73] As both the client and the guidance counsellor bring their own contextual and cultural background and personal values to bear in the professional relationship, guidance counsellors need to develop high levels of personal reflectiveness.[74]

[73] NICE: Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe. (2012) *Handbook for the Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professionals,* Heidelberg: Heidelberg University. http://www.nice-network.eu/welcome/publications

[74] CEDEFOP European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, (2009), Annual Report. European Communities/ Commission. p71.

# 4. CORE GUIDANCE PRACTICE COMPETENCY

Personal problems cannot be separated from career concerns and both are inextricably linked.[75] Guidance counsellors facilitate a process which may enable clients to make sense of the current situation they are experiencing, work through issues, towards solutions to realize personal change.[76]

Personal and social counselling assists clients in addressing personal, social development, and academic matters. It helps them to learn to cope with life's current demands. Personal/social counselling facilitates the prevention, and healing of emotional pain and injury. In addition, it promotes and seeks to assist clients in conducting lifestyles that are emotionally and socially healthy.

**Issues addressed in personal/social counselling include, but are not limited to, grief/loss, suicide,[77, 78] self-harm[79], family issues, relationship issues, harassment, loneliness, sadness, assertiveness, financial problems, lack of employment[80], health concerns, school difficulties, stress and anger management, anxiety and substance abuse, and developmental or mental health issues**

Responsive services, including individual and group counselling, relevant seminars and workshops, internal and external referral procedures, short-term counselling or crisis intervention focused on mental health or situational (e.g. grief, difficult transitions), accompany personal/social counselling with the intent of helping the client return to normal functioning and removing barriers to moving forward.

[75] Ibid.

[76] NICE: Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling. (2012) *Handbook for the Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professionals,* Heidelberg: Heidelberg University.

[77] http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental_Health_Services/NOSP/SuicidePreventionie/suicideselfharm

[78] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=12014&pcode=tps00122&language=en

[79] With regard to self-harm in Ireland, data from 122,743 self-harm presentations to hospital in Ireland from 2003 to 2013 held by the National Registry of Deliberate Self-Harm (NRDSH) showed that the rate of use of lethal methods of self-harm has increased significantly since 2004, with the greatest increase among those aged 15-29 years. http://nsrf.ie/wp-content/uploads/reports/NSRF%20Registry%20Web.pdf

[80] https://bmcpsychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-244X-13-144

# Knowledge

*2.1* Counselling skills, at the heart of which are the core competencies of empathy, genuineness, warmth, acceptance, empowerment, trust and unconditional positive regard

*2.2* Theories of counselling and of group facilitation, group leadership, group membership and how groups function

*2.3* Factors related to the personal development of individuals and the dynamics of their behaviour

*2.4* Factors affecting emotional, social, cultural and cognitive development[81]

*2.5* The counselling process, including the ability to develop and sustain a counselling relationship with the client

*2.6* How to engage in reflective practice, self-care, supervision and CPD to support professional practice[82]

*2.7* Programmes that promote client safety and wellbeing

*2.8* Knowledge of personal factors, including interest, aptitudes, skills, values, goals, expectations, personal characteristics, physical/health conditions, individual self-awareness, personal effectiveness, past and current experiences, hobbies, vision of the ideal lifestyle, learning experiences and life achievement,[83] which inform the work of the guidance counsellor with the client

*2.9* Develop strategies to overcome personal, role and value conflicts, while working with a client with a background different to that of the counsellor, in alignment with professional and ethical standards for career guidance and counselling.[84]

*2.10* An understanding of the framework for lifelong guidance[85]

*2.11* An understanding of multicultural values and issues which relate to career decision-making and how these cross-cultural matters impact on the working relationships with clients

[81] Department of Education & Skills, (March 2015) *Consultative Document on Proposed Criteria for Providers of Initial Education Programmes in Guidance Counselling*

[82] Institute of Guidance Counsellors (March 2012) *IGC Code of Ethics* http://www.igc.ie/About-Us/Our Constitution/Code-of-Ethics

[83] Korkut-Owen, Fidan., et al. (2015), *Career Sailboat Model as a tool for the guidance counsellor* School Guidance Handbook, Dublin: NCGE. http://schoolguidancehandbook.ncge.ie/document-detail/Career-Sailboat-Model-as-a-tool-for-the-Guidance-Counsellor/50

[84] NICE: Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (2015) *European Competence Standards for Academic Training of Career Professionals* Heidelberg: Heidelberg University

[85] National Guidance Forum: (2007) *Guidance for life: An Integrated Framework for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland.*

## Practice

*2.12* Plan, design, implement and evaluate lifelong personal and social development programmes and interventions for clients[86]

*2.13* Assist clients to develop self-awareness of their personal values, attitudes, beliefs and those of others and provide space for creative reflection

*2.14* Help clients identify strategies for building self-esteem

*2.15* Facilitate individuals in identifying and expanding existing coping strategies

*2.16* Assist clients to understand the importance of emotional expression and how to develop ways to express these appropriately, incorporating self-regulation and self soothing strategies

*2.17* Facilitate clients to formulate and review a personal development plan within their current social, educational or employment contexts

*2.18* Assist clients to develop communication skills and collaborative relationships for achieving their goals

*2.19* Help clients in understanding the importance of positive thinking and developing the ability to use this life skill effectively

*2.20* Assist clients in understanding the impact of stress on emotional and social health, and developing personal skills for managing stress

*2.21* Promote effective negotiation in managing conflict

*2.22* Assist clients to be autonomous, independent and to act responsibly in life/work decision-making

*2.23* Help clients to develop assertiveness and resilience in their lives

*2.24* Assist in the creation and delivery of appropriate programmes of 'well-being' relevant to the context or practice setting

*2.25* Advocacy on behalf of clients, where appropriate, to improve personal or social difficulties

*2.26* Consult with client's family, where appropriate, and liaise with referral agencies

[86] See also National Guidance Forum (2007) *Guidance for Life: An Integrated Framework for Lifelong Guidance,* Dublin: NGF

# Educational Guidance Counselling

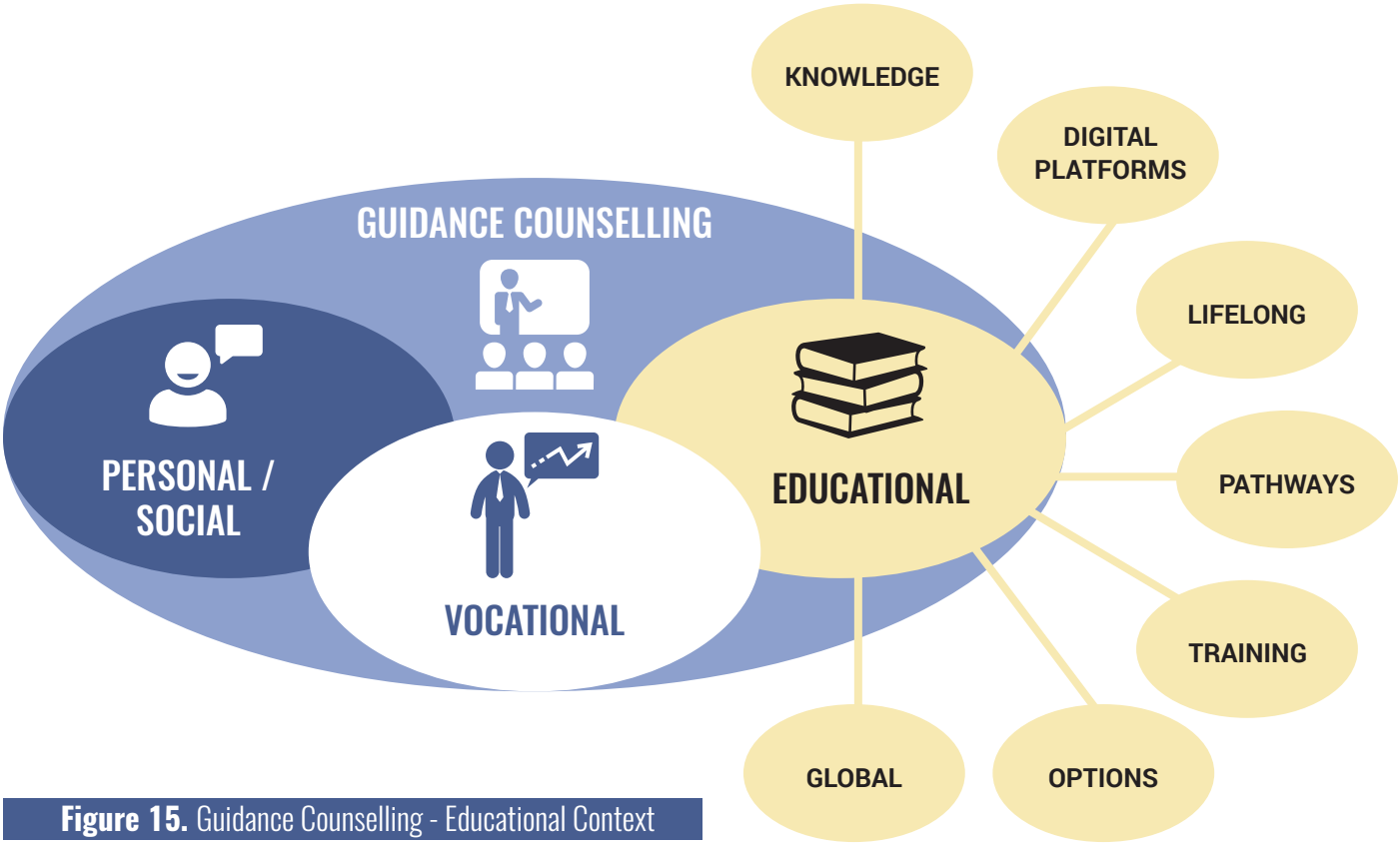


**Figure 15.** Guidance Counselling - Educational Context

The educational guidance counselling process through the lifespan includes:

- understanding the client's current goals and assisting the client in the identification of training or educational requirements to pursue them
- proposing possible entry pathways for consideration
- clarifying for the client current information and alerting to gaps in information
- establishing the feasibility and appropriateness of the pending decision for the client
- proposing sources of information for further research
- helping the client to set targets for the next step in the decision process

The process of educational guidance counselling involves the guidance counsellor supporting the development of client self-efficacy, self activation and responsibility, by progressively encouraging in the client

the responsibility for the decision making process. Information sourcing and gathering encourages client career management skills, while helping the client to negotiate progression pathways. The guidance counsellor's role in the relationship is listening, seeking clarification, summarising, giving feedback, giving additional information, answering questions, challenging misconceptions and promoting client self awareness.

As the client considers and negotiates progression pathway options, the guidance counsellor assists the client in developing educational or training plans appropriate to the current life stage and transitional needs. Educational components might include for example:

- subject options at second or third level, appropriate to ability and current interests
- active and problem based approaches to learning
- creating opportunities for the development of career management skills
- awareness of the range of alternative educational entry and progression routes
- identifying, for the client, access to sources of information in relation to specific occupational skills - a precursor to researching training requirements
- training requirements in relation to transitions within or between employments
- opportunities for professional development, retraining and re-skilling

Increasing access to global work contexts, including the expansion of employment across digital platforms, is now matched with developing and diversifying education and training systems, as well as targeting and attracting interest in education and training options beyond national borders. Added to this, is the accelerating pace of the changing nature of work, contributing to the need to reconstruct careers through multiple progression pathways across the lifespan, and the need for lifelong learning and retraining.

These transformations, while providing opportunities, increase the complexity of choice and the difficulty of the decision making process for the client.[87] They also emphasise the importance of acquiring core transferable soft skills and work competencies, including personal qualities of flexibility and resilience. In addition, these transformations require the educative component of the guidance counselling process to place an increasing emphasis on the development of problem solving abilities in the learner/client as a core learning and life competency.

Educational guidance counselling supports the client in identifying possibilities, and, when changing life or work contexts, to rethink themselves and their role in society.

[87] OECD (2010) Learning for Jobs, p.77. *Policy Reviews of Vocational Education and Training* (VET) OECD: Corrigenda Publications, Paris. www.oecd.org/publishihg/corrigenda

## Knowledge

- ***3.1*** Ability to foster an appreciation of, and commitment, to lifelong learning
- ***3.2*** Help plan, design, implement educational development programmes and interventions[88]
- ***3.3*** Knowledge of national and international qualification systems[89] and all routes to further and higher education and training
- ***3.4*** Knowledge and ability to source international academic qualifications, their equivalences and pathways
- ***3.5*** Awareness of, and ability to employ, motivational strategies to help clients appreciate their talents, aptitudes and skills in order to reach their full potential
- ***3.6*** Ability to source, simplify and reduce the complexity of information in order 'to confront informational problems such as information overflow, stereotypes, disinformation and lack of information, taking into consideration the needs and capacity of clients'[90]
- ***3.7*** Ability to assess course content and differentiate emphases across courses and assist clients in so doing
- ***3.8*** Keeping up-to-date with the latest research findings in educational guidance counselling
- ***3.9*** Stay informed aboout global work contexts including digital work platforms

[88] National Guidance Forum (2007) *Guidance for Life. An Integrated Framework for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland,* p.12.

[89] See www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4116_en.pdf for information on international qualifications for education and training systems; www.qqi.ie for national systems and recognition of international qualifications; www.qualifax.ie, for access to education and training information both national and international.

[90] NICE Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling- (2015) *European Competence Standards for Career Professionals and Career Advisors,* (Final Draft) Heidelberg: Heidelberg University, p.4

## Practice

***3.10*** Promote and enable digital literacy, problem based learning; promote an awareness of creativity and an understanding of multiple, emotional and social intelligences as key elements of the curriculum at all educational levels

***3.11*** Adapt content and information delivery, appropriate to the specific concerns, learning strategies, interests, demands, needs and traits of clients[91]

***3.12*** Guide individuals and groups of clients to develop specific educational plans

***3.13*** Where applicable, consult, and be available for consultation, with parents/guardians of clients, on client's educational progress and development

***3.14*** Assist clients in identifying their educational development challenges and accessing appropriate learning support needs

***3.15*** Assist clients in identifying their learning style and, where feasible, to identify which courses may thus be more appropriate

***3.16*** Inform and advise clients during the process of making subject/educational choices and where appropriate, use psychometric tests to assist clients with these choices

***3.17*** Advise on possible modifications of educational experience required to cater for the client's individual needs

***3.18*** Consult and liaise with educators, social workers, administrators, and guardians, to enhance work with clients and coordinate where appropriate

***3.19*** Help co-ordinate educational and community personnel, where appropriate, to enhance possible resources for clients

[91] NICE Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling - *Handbook for the Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professionals.* Heidelberg: Heidelberg University 2012, p.65.

# Practice Competency Information Sources


- ELGPN (2015) *Guidelines for Lifelong Guidance Policies and Systems for the Education and Training Sector,* http://iccdpp.org/guidelines-policies-systems-development-lifelong-guidance-reference-framework-eu-commission

- Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (2015) *Future in Focus: Atlantic Career Development Framework for Public Education 2015-2020.* Ottawa, Canada

- Department of Education and Skills (March 2015) *Consultative Document on Proposed Criteria for Providers of Initial Education Programmes in Guidance Counselling* Dublin: DES

- CEDEFOP (2009) European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, *Annual Report* Greece: European Communities Commission

- Hearne, L. and Galvin, J. (2014) The Role of the Regular Teacher in a Whole School Approach to Guidance Counselling in Ireland. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling,* 43(2), Oxford: Routledge –Taylor & Francis

- International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners, IAEVG (2003) *International Competencies for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners* Final report presented to the IAEVG, Madrid, September 2003 http://iaevg.net/iaevg.org/IAEVG/nav0f9a.html?lang=2&menu=1&submenu=5

- Korkut-Owen, Fidan., et al. (2015) *Career Sailboat Model as a Tool for the Guidance Counsellor,* School Guidance Handbook, Dublin: NCGE

- National Guidance Forum, (2007) *Guidance for Life: An Integrated Framework for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland.* Ireland: NGF
- National Career Development Association, (1997) *Career Counselling Competencies,* NCDA, USA.
- Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe, (2012) NICE *Handbook for the Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professionals,* Heidelberg: Heidelberg University
- Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe, (2012) NICE *Handbook for the Academic Training of Career Guidance and Counselling Professionals - Common Points of Reference,* Heidelberg: Heidelberg University
- Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe, (2015) NICE *The European Competence Standards for Career Professionals and Career Advisors* Final Draft, Heidelberg: Heidelberg University
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD (2010) *Learning for Jobs, Policy Reviews of Vocational Education and Training* (VET) Paris: OECD Corrigenda Publications, p 77 www.oecd.org/publishing
- O'Rourke, Dr. Michael.L.(2015) Life-span Development and Career Interventions. IGC *Guideline*, 45 (1).
- Zunker, Vernon G. (2014) *Career Counselling: A Holistic Approach* (9th Ed.). Boston, MA. 0220 USA: Cenage Learning.

# PART TWO

## PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

## A Profession

A profession is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and are accepted by the public as possessing specialist knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training to a high level, and who are prepared to exercise this knowledge and skills in the interest of others[92].

## Professionalism

**Figure 16.** Traits of Professionalism

'The guidance counsellor demonstrates professionalism by adhering to legal, ethical and professional competence standards in their practice'[93] A respect for the client, coupled with the ethical values of competence, responsibility and integrity serve to guide the practitioner in situations of competing obligations and of uncertainty where they are called on to make professional judgments.

[92] See Career Industry Council of Australia, (2006) *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners,* Australia: CICA Cited in National Guidance Forum Report, 2007

[93] Swain, Dr. R. *The Guidance Counsellor and Professional Ethics,* NCGE 04/08. The Guidance Counsellor's Handbook (Currently out of print)

Guidance counsellors apply those guidelines which are relevant to the requirements of practice contexts, with due regard to statutory requirements, legislation and the codes of ethics of those professional bodies of which they are members.[94]

**Figure 17.** Aspects of Professional Practice

## Contracting

In establishing contracts with clients, guidance counsellors work within their level of competence and experience and refrain from offering services which fail to meet the professional standards of the Institute of Guidance Counsellor's *Code of Ethics*

In establishing contracts outside of publicly funded services, for example in private practice, guidance counsellors take responsibility for making clear to clients any financial liabilities before they are incurred

[94] Please refer to the Professional Codes of Ethics listed in the Information Sources at the end of this section and in the General Bibliography

In general, the guidance counsellor should consider giving the following information, as appropriate, to clients before the process of undertaking any guidance counselling activity, mindful of client diversity, including gender, culture, age and ability:

- the guidance counsellor's role in the relationship
- the extent of the guidance counsellor's responsibilities
- qualifications, areas of expertise and relevant limitations
- the nature of the guidance counselling activities involved and the reasons for undertaking them and the benefits to the client in the case of assessment or counselling
- any referral options which may benefit the client, where any presenting issue is beyond the guidance counsellor's current level of competency
- the client's right to access information obtained through assessment, in particular if this is to be shared with third parties, e.g., psychologists or other professionals
- confidentiality in the counselling process and any limitations of confidentiality , including issues related to record keeping, supervision, research and continuing professional development
- the client's right to engage in and to withdraw from involvement in the process at any stage

## Confidentiality

- Guidance counsellors have a responsibility to inform prospective clients of the extent and limitations of confidentiality with respect to the anticipated guidance counselling service, counselling and assessment
- Clients are entitled to expect that the information they give a guidance counsellor about themselves, information derived through assessment and information disclosed in counselling, will remain confidential
- Clients should be informed of the limits of confidentiality where information about them may be shared. This will apply for example when dealing with minors, when issues of safety override those of confidentiality[95]
- Guidance counsellors bring confidentiality in their practice to the attention of employers, managers and other professionals involved
- The guidance counsellor is not released from maintaining confidentiality because others have the same information.

[95] When dealing with minors, refer to *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* [2011] www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/children-first

## Valid Consent

- Guidance counsellors undertake to obtain consent of the client before communicating the results of any assessments or interventions with family members, colleagues, organisational or institutional management or other agencies
- The principle of valid consent applies, irrespective of whether the guidance counsellor operates in the public or private sector, in training or academic research
- The guidance counsellor offers the client the opportunity to ask questions and clarify information on any matter of concern relating to any guidance counselling intervention
- For training or research purposes, the guidance counsellor obtains the consent in advance for the use of digital recording with a clear explanation of the purpose for which the research is intended.

## Competence

- The guidance counsellor is responsible for competence maintenance, is aware of his/her area of competence and offers services within his/her area of training and expertise
- Good ethical practice requires that a guidance counsellor consults on areas of concern or doubt
- The guidance counsellor refrains from offering any service which is likely to cause harm to the client
- The guidance counsellor shall be prepared to refer on those cases which are beyond his/her area of expertise or training
- It is the responsibility of the guidance counsellor to be familiar with public and private agencies to which the client may be referred for further assistance
- It is unethical for a guidance counsellor to lay claim to professional expertise which exceeds that actually attained

## Record Keeping and Access to Records

- When making or keeping records, care should be taken to distinguish between fact, observation and opinion and, to include only such information as is required for the purpose of professional involvement with the client
- Where a decision is made, the basis for the decision is noted.

- Statutory responsibility with regard to records applies to all media, whether written hardcopy, electronic or digitally recorded[96]
- Guidance counsellors are responsible for holding their records securely to ensure the confidentiality of the information contained within them and to control access to them[97]
- Clients have a right to access records concerning them[98]
- Guidance counsellors give clients appropriate feedback in relation to testing, be that either formal or informal assessment
- Guidance counsellors employ accessible language and avoid obscure professional terminology

## Self-Care

- In light of the trust placed in them by clients, and because of the personal and confidential nature of their work, guidance counsellors need to be mindful of the ethical and moral requirements of their profession[99]
- Self-care and maintaining a balanced lifestyle contribute to stress management and a well-rounded guidance service
- Working collaboratively with, and making appropriate referrals to, other professionals, help to manage stress levels
- Recognising patterns of stress in working contexts assists the guidance counsellor in sensitive planning and service management
- Self-care and professional growth contribute to the development of rational detachment to support a professional response to stressful situations

## CPD

- Competence development is a lifelong process, linked with personal development and reflection on practice
- The guidance counsellor is responsible for his/her continual professional growth and development in the field of guidance counselling
- Guidance counsellors undertake professional development activities to satisfy eligibility for membership of the IGC and of other professional bodies to which they subscribe

[96] Guidance Counsellors practising in education settings should be aware of the statutory requirements in relation to the following acts: Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2003, and the Freedom of Information Act, 2014. See General Bibliography for each Act's website address.

[97] Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003 https://www.dataprotection.ie/docs/LAW-ON-DATA-PROTECTION/795.htm

[98] Freedom of Information Act, 2014 http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2014/a3014.pdf

[99] Institute of Guidance Counsellors (March 2012) IGC *Code of Ethics,* Dublin: IGC. See also, Codes of Ethics listed in the Section *Sources of Information* at the end of this section and in the General Bibliography.

## Supervision

- Supervision provides support for guidance counsellors in their individual work and ensures client safety, quality control and professional practice safety by safeguarding against ethical malpractice
- Guidance counsellors engage in appropriate supervision, proportionate to their workload and use it to further develop counselling skills and to progress work with clients
- In cases where supervision is not funded by the employer, it is the responsibility of each guidance counsellor to organise supervision appropriate to their work context and proportionate to client workload.

## Professional Practice Section Information Sources

**CODES OF ETHICS**

British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy, (BACP), *Ethical Framework*
http://www.bacp.co.uk/admin/structure/files/pdf/14237_ethical-framework-jun15-final.pdf

British Psychological Society, *Code of Ethics and Conduct*
http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/documents/code_of_ethics_and_conduct.pdff

Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy, *Code of Ethics*
http://www.irish-counselling.ie/iacp-code-of-ethics

Institute of Guidance Counsellors, *Code of Ethics*
http://www.igc.ie/About-Us/Our-Constitution/Code-of-Ethics

Institute of Guidance Counsellors, *Code of Ethics for Guidance Counselling Supervisors*
http://www.igc.ie/download/1/IGC_Code_of_Ethics___Practice_2009.pdf

Psychological Society of Ireland, *Code of Ethics*
http://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/find-a-psychologist/code-of-ethics.html

Bolton Oetzel, Keri. and Scherer, David G. (2003). Therapeutic Engagement with Adolescents in Psychotherapy *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training.* 40 (3) 215-22

- British Psychological Society, Psychological Testing Centre (2007). *Statement on the Conduct of Psychologists Providing Expert Psychometric Evidence to Courts and Lawyers* British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP)

- British Psychological Society, Committee on Tests Standards, (2010). *Code of Good Practice for Psychological Testing.* Approved by the BPS Membership Standards Board.

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# CONCLUSION

With the publication of this document, *Core Competencies and Professional Practice*, the Institute of Guidance Counsellors is, firstly, positioning itself in the context of best generic competencies in guidance counselling practice, whatever the practice context. It details these in a transparent way in order to state clearly and unambiguously the role of guidance counsellors and the knowledge and generic competencies required in their professional practice, thus leading to enhanced mastery of their role. The generic training, skill and sensitivity of the guidance counsellor enable a seamless considered response to the emerging needs of the client, through the application of counselling, assessment and practice skills across the three spheres of activity - personal/ social, educational, and vocational.

This practice of guidance counselling is a holistic, integrationist provision. It places the client firmly at the centre of the process in an immediate and relevant way, a provision described by D.E. Super, as interacting, overlapping. Ryan (1993) noted that *'the Irish guidance counselling service tends to be a compromise between the American model, which emphasizes personal counselling and the European model which almost exclusively focuses on the narrow concept of career guidance'*[100]. The inclusion of personal counselling in the Irish model is described as a distinctive feature of guidance counselling in Europe[101]. Thus, the competencies are embedded firmly in the core counselling competence which permeates, informs and influences the understanding and practice of all aspects of the guidance counselling work.

Its second purpose in publication is that… "counsellors must be concerned with disseminating their knowledge and services as part of a knowledge society"[102]. Clarity about, and understanding of, the services provided by guidance counsellors is fundamental to the provision of integrated, cohesive supportive services for clients, given the multifaceted nature of the problems presented by them and, the need for the involvement of different professionals and services.

The context for the conversation about guidance counselling in the 21st century, which needs to take place between all stakeholders, is enormously challenging. It is *"a world occupational structure that is in considerable flux; that is increasingly affected by the pervasive influence of advance technology on workplace*

[100] Ryan, L.(1993) *Counselling the Adolescent in a Changing Ireland: A National Survey of Second Level Schools in Ireland.* Dublin: Institute of Guidance Counsellors, p.63

[101] Hayes, C. and Morgan, P. (2011) refer to "….the distinctive features of counselling by guidance counsellors in Ireland" *The Practice of Counselling by Guidance Counsellors in Post Primary Schools*. Dublin: NCGE, Introduction, p.9

[102] Savickas, Mark. L., Nota, Laura., Rosier, Jerome., Dauwalder, Jean-Pierre., Duarte, Maria Eduarda., Guichard, Jean.,Soresi, Salvatore., Van Esbroeck, Raoul., van Vianen., Annelies E.M. Life designing: a Paradigm for Career Construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 75(2009) 239-250, p.248.

# CONCLUSION

*procedures that reduce the need for worker's physical strength and increase their needs for knowledge and intellectual strength; and in which the opportunities to work, the language of work, the educational requirements to do work, and the organization to do work are changing throughout the world."*[103]

In conditions where "jobs that are too small for the human spirit"[104], that often degrade human dignity as a function of economic and workplace issues, the practice of guidance counselling has never been more needed, and "among its other outcomes, serves as a mechanism to provide hope to people, the affirmation of their individual dignity and worth, and the support to establish new career directions."[105] By instilling hope, engendering optimism, and envisioning cooperatively the future with clients, our members perpetuate the finest traditions of the guidance counselling profession.

This document, therefore, is challenging on many fronts and poses many questions of all stakeholders; from the practitioner, it requires a full commitment to reflexive practice and ongoing training suitable for the context in which they work; from the representative professional bodies themselves, it requires a comprehensive review of all accreditation and training which will underpin a member's professional status; for guidance counsellor trainers, it sets out the highest standards in terms of competency training required, and invites them, even in the face of economic cutbacks, to retain the depth, rigour and the span of training necessary to produce guidance counsellors of the highest calibre in this challenging age; from employers and policy makers, it looks for recognition that *'there is no individual self-determination without social solidarity'*[106] and that *'life long career guidance can serve to…. reinvigorate the social contract that does not abandon humanity to the vagaries of the market, but places the dignity and welfare of citizens first.'*[107]

The delivery of a guidance counselling service in these difficult times, the aim of which is solidarity with and support of clients in their pursuit of personal, social, educational and vocational goals, demands that all stakeholders understand, recognize, and appreciate each other's role, and work together in a concerted holistic fashion.

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors believes that this resource will serve as a template for the future understanding and practice of guidance counselling in Ireland: a source of inspiration and knowledge for all.

[103] Herr, Edwin L., Career Development and Its Practice: a Historical Perspective. *The Career Development Quarterly*, March 2001, Volume 49, p.206

[104] Stoer, S.R., and Magalhaes, A.M.(2002) The Reconfiguration of the Modern Social Contract: New Forms of Citizenship and Education. *European Educational Research,* I(4), 692-704 Cited in Sultana, Ronald.G., Lifelong guidance, citizen rights and the state: reclaiming the social contract. *British Journal of Guidance Counselling*, Vol.39, No.2, April 2011, 179-186. P.182.

[105] Sultana., Ibid, p.182

[106] Habermas, J., (1992). *Autonomy and Solidarity: Interviews with Jurgen Habermas*, S (P. Dews, Ed). London:Verso, quoted in Sultana, Ibid, p.184.

[107] Sultana, Ronald G., Ibid.

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# APPENDIX 1
## Recommended Procedure for Ethical Decision Making

Section 3.5 of the IGC *Code of Ethics*[108] deals with the resolution of ethical dilemmas, and all the clauses in that section are relevant to the making of ethical decisions. Clause 3.5.1 states that members shall adopt a systematic approach to both the investigation of ethical issues and the resolution of dilemmas, and recommends the use of a formal decision-making procedure such as the one presented here.

The procedure is designed for both routine issues and immediate problems. In particular, it is intended to reduce the incidence of decisions which are errors of judgment because they are taken in the heat of the moment, without consideration of all the relevant factors. A considered professional judgment made in a systematic way is likely to be sounder and more defensible:

1. Define the issues and the parties involved (parties may include clients, clients' parents, employers, clinical supervisors, the wider profession and the general public)

2. Consult relevant guidelines, including this Code. Read the *Code* and identify all relevant clauses. Also check other applicable professional guidelines (for example, those of government departments or HSE) and any pertinent legislation (for example, relating to child protection or equality). Consulting with colleagues is also often appropriate

3. Evaluate the rights, responsibilities and welfare of all affected parties

4. Separate the creation of possible solutions (decisions) from a critical analysis of them. Firstly, in creative mode, generate uncritically as many alternative decisions as possible

5. Then and only then, in critical mode, carefully evaluate the likely outcome of each decision

6. Choose what, in your professional judgment, is the best decision, implement it, and inform relevant parties

7. Finally, take responsibility for the consequences of the decision

**It is recommended that notes be kept of deliberations at each stage of the process.**

[108] http://www.igc.ie/About-Us/Our-Constitution/Code-of-Ethics

# APPENDIX 2
# General Sources of Information Relating to Testing & Suppliers of Psychometric Tests & Self-Report Measures

The purchase and use of most of the assessment instruments supplied by the distributers listed below require psychometric accreditation at the following levels:

- BPS accreditation as Test User: Occupational, Ability (formerly the BPS certificate of competence in occupation testing, Level A) Qualification to use instruments assessing aptitude, ability and interest
- BPS Test User: Occupational, Personality (formerly Level B) Qualification with conversion programme to use 16PF and MBTI.
- BPS accreditation offers eligibility to Registered Qualified Test User (RQTU) status with the BPS. In addition, the BPS Psychological Testing Centre (PTC) allows RQTU members to provide a description of the testing services they offer, plus their contact information.
- Both accreditation levels above entitle application for the Euro-Test Certificate

## General information

1. The Institute of Guidance Counsellors www.igc.ie
2. The Psychological Testing Centre / British Psychological Society www.psychtesting.org.uk
3. The American Psychological Association www.apa.org.
4. The Psychological Society of Ireland http://www.psihq.ie/

## Distributers

ABILITY

5. Psytech International www.psytech.co.uk
6. PAN Testing www.pantesting.com
7. GL Assessment www.gl-assessment.co.uk
8. Educational Research Centre www.erc.ie
9. Pearson Clinical www.pearsonclinical.co.uk
10. Lucid Research www.lucid-research.com
11. Hodder www.hodderstests.com
12. OPP www.opp.com/en/tools/ABLE-Series

# Distributers

ABILITY AND ATTAINMENT

13. Psytech International www.psytech.co.uk
14. PAN Testing www.pantesting.com
15. Vangent www.vangent.hcr.com
16. ETC Consult www.etcconsult.ie
17. Cambridge Occupational Analysts www.coa.co.uk
18. Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt www.riversidepublishing.com
19. The Educational Research Centre www.erc.ie
20. Thomas International www.thomasinternational.com

INTEREST

21. OPP https://www.opp.com/en/tools/Strong-Interest-Inventory
22. CASCAiD www.cascaid.co.uk
23. Cambridge Occupational Analysts www.coa.co.uk
24. Multiple Intelligences Research and Consulting www.miresearch.org
25. AQR Test Publishers www.aqr.co.uk
26. PAR Professional Assessment Resources www.parinc.com
27. Psychometrix www.psychometrix.ie
28. Psytech International www.psytech.co.uk
29. Profiling for Success www.profilingforsuccess.com
30. Chronicle Guidance Publications www.chronilceguidance.com
31. OPP www.opp.eu.com
32. McCarron-Dial Systems www.mccarrondial.com
33. CareersPortal www.careersportal.ie
34. Qualifax www.qualifax.ie

VALUES

35. PFS Profiling for Success www.profilingforsuccess.com
36. PAN Performance Assessment Network www.pantesting.com

PERSONALITY TRAITS

37. OPP www.opp.com/en
38. Psytech International www.psytech.co.uk
39. Online International Personality Item Pool www.personal.psu.edu/j5j/IPIP
40. PAN Performance Assessment Network www.pantesting.com
41. ETC Consult www.etcconsult.ie
42. OPP www.opp.com

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

43. Psytech International www.psytech.co.uk
44. PAN Performance Assessment Network www.pantesting.com

ONLINE AND PRINTED CAREERS RESOURCES

45. www.babcock-lifeskills.com

# APPENDIX 3
## Guidelines for Developing Policy in Relation to Psychometric Testing

The following is provided as an example of the sort of matters such a policy might cover. The details will vary as a function of the assessment context, whether in an educational setting, other public service setting or private practice.

Contracts between the guidance counsellor, test takers and other parties are often implicit and unspoken. However, making clear the expectations, roles and responsibilities of all parties can help to avoid misunderstanding, harm and litigation.

The policy will endeavor to

- address the rights of test takers regarding how their test scores will be used and the test user's right to access to results
- state the existence of any financial charges if relevant for the particular provide clarity in relation to inclusivity and impartiality in relation factors such as age, gender & disability
- give assurance of the use of tests of proven quality, appropriate for the test taker's needs, and appropriate for the assessment purpose
- provide guidelines used in relation to informing test user prior to testing about the purpose of the assessment, the nature of the test, to whom tests results will be reported and the planned use of the results
- clarify issues in relation to giving advance notice of when the test will be administered, when the results will be available and the manner in which test results will be communicated to the test taker
- clarify issues in relation to the administration of tests and the interpretation of results

# APPENDIX 4
## Communicating Test Results to Clients[109]

The following guidelines are drawn from the British Psychological Society's *Communicating Test Results: Guidelines for Test Users* (2016)
Types of Scores

**RAW SCORES:** Raw scores should not generally be communicated to test takers or other parties who have an interest in the results of testing, as they are not usually meaningful in themselves. Raw scores need to be put into context through norm referencing, criterion referencing or similar, and it is these contextualised scores that should be communicated. Types of scores: Raw scores can be translated into a range of contextualised scores. Common examples include standardised scores, T scores, stens, stanines and percentiles, though some tests use other types of contextualised scores. One or more of these score types should be used when communicating test results.

**USE OF SCORE BANDS:** Some test users communicate test scores as 'score bands'. For example, a test score may fall within the 'average band' or 'below average band'. The use of score bands in test documentation is often inconsistent, as different tests use different numbers of bands, have different boundary points between bands and may use different descriptors for bands covering the same or a similar range of scores. If test users want to use score bands, it is recommended that they develop a local policy on test use that is adopted and used consistently by all test users in their organisation.

**ITEM-LEVEL SCORES:** Item-level scores should not be communicated to test takers, and in most cases not to other parties. In certain situations item-level responses may be used qualitatively for diagnostic purposes (e.g. looking at the types of words a child has spelt incorrectly in a spelling test), but when item-level responses are communicated it is the responsibility of the test user to ensure the recipient is appropriately trained to interpret them. Test users need to be careful that providing this level of information on a test does not infringe the publisher's or other party's intellectual property rights over the test materials.

**USE OF CONFIDENCE INTERVALS:** Reputable psychometric tests should contain information on their level of reliability which, in turn, is used to derive confidence intervals. Test users should acknowledge the precision of measurement in test scores and communicate both test scores and their associated confidence bands.

**ENSURING UNDERSTANDING:** It is the responsibility of test users to ensure that any information they communicate about a test and its results, whether in

[109] Reproduced with permission from the Psychological Testing Centre (2016) *Communicating Test Results: Guidelines for Test Users,* BPS www.psychtesting.org.uk

written or oral form, is accurately understood by the recipient. Before communicating test results, test users should consider:

- the intended audience; whether they are test trained or not and their general level of understanding of tests and test results
- the purpose of testing and how results will be used
- what other information, if any, is being considered alongside the test results
- how results will be presented (written and/or orally) and what opportunities for review of results with the test taker or other parties are available
- any organisational policies regarding test use that exist and the guidance given in these
- their level of competence in providing the necessary interpretation of the results, seeking support from professional colleagues where they consider this necessary

**DEVELOPING LOCAL POLICIES OF TEST USE** As each test user will operate in a different context, it is recommended that organisations develop their own policy on test use. As well as covering the communication of test results, such policies may cover areas such as selection of tests to use, data storage and training requirements for test users. It is important that all people using tests in the organisation are familiar with the test use policy and follow it. Test use policies should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are current, reflect the organisation's needs and procedures, and comply with relevant legislation.

**PROVISION OF SCORES UNDER THE DATA PROTECTION ACT (1988)** Under the Data Protection Act (DPA) test takers normally have a right of access to information that is held on them. If a 'subject access request' is made under the DPA, information provided to test takers must be in a form that is understandable. Information would therefore typically be presented in terms of a contextualised score, including information about the norm group or similar used in the contextualisation, and confidence band. A description of the test and construct(s) it measures should also be included to ensure the information provided can be fully understood.

# APPENDIX 5
## Some National & International Policy Sources of Relevance to Guidance Counselling

Global, European, and national agencies provide guidance on career programmes and training opportunities for career development and acquisition of career management skills.
The following is a sample of some that offer supports and insights for the work of the guidance counsellor:

The ***International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy*** facilitates international policy sharing and learning through the international exchange of knowledge and information concerning public policy and career development issues.[110]
www.iccdpp.org

The ***European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network*** (ELGPN) provides a reference guide[111] for lifelong guidance policy in education, training, labour market and social inclusion. This site offers a variety of services and products in a variety of settings across the education and employment sectors.[112]
www.elgpn.eu

The ***European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training*** (CEDEFOP) 2016 work programme sets out a strategic framework for vocational education and training up to 2020.[113] This programme reflects the objective to support the plan for a more qualified European workforce.
www.cedefop.europa.eu

The ***Further Education and Training Authority*** (SOLAS) has streamlined a more efficient Irish skills training service under Education Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) 2013.[114]
www.etbi.ie / www.solas.ie

The ***National Skills Strategy 2025*** identifies Ireland's current skills profile, provides a strategic vision and specific objectives for our future skills requirements, and sets out a road map on how the vision and objectives can be achieved. The strategy highlights

[110] ICCDPP International Cente for Career Development and Public Policy. http://iccdpp.org

[111] European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (2015) ELGPN Tools No 6. *Guidelines for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance.* A Reference Framework for the E.U. and for the Commission (2015) Jyuaskla Finland, p10.

[112] Ibid. p. 7. No 6.

[113] CEDEFOP The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training- (2016) Work Programme pp. 10-19.

[114] etbi.ie solas.ie

the importance of the provision of guidance counselling[115] and calls for a review of guidance services, tools and career information for students and adults.[116]
http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/PolicyReports/pub_national_skills_strategy_2025.pdf

The ***National Strategy for Higher Education*** to 2030 has a number of strategies to widen access to people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and is planning more broad based courses and greater interdisciplinary learning opportunities. The strategy is fostering entrepreneurial imagination and encouraging Irish graduates to be job shapers and not just job seekers.[117]
www.hea.ie/en/policy/national-strategy

The ***New Zealand Association of Counsellors*** in their school guidance section outlines how Principals and School boards can promote safe practice and effective counselling in schools. It also provides a School Guidance Counsellor appointment kit.
http://www.nzac.org.nz/school_guidance_counsellors.cfm

***The New Work Order*** is a useful analysis, prepared by the ***Foundation for Young Australians,*** of the skills and expertise young Australians must acquire for the jobs of the future. It gives an excellent review of the opportunities and challenges presented with this new work order.
http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/fya-future-of-work-report-final-lr.pdf

[115] Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025- Published by Department of Education and Science Ireland Jan 2016 p97.

[116] Ibid. p. 80.

[117] Hunt, Colin. DES *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* Implementation Plan Department of Education and Skills, June 2011 p.37

# APPENDIX 6
## Equality and Employment Legislation

While guidance counsellors must be mindful of all Irish legislation which has relevance for their work, nevertheless, the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2011, given their wide remit across so many sections of society, require special attention. It is important that guidance counsellors are aware of how the acts apply to their own work. Also, the Acts may be relevant to a client's presenting experience as they prohibit discrimination on nine grounds: gender; civil status; family status; age; disability; sexual orientation; race – including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins; religious belief and, membership of the travelling community.

Discrimination outside the workplace is prohibited by the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2011. Anyone trying to access goods or services and who feels discriminated against unlawfully, on any of the nine prohibited grounds, can make a claim under these Acts. They cover many different goods and services, including access to a place, facilities for banking, entertainment, cultural activities or transport, professional or trade services, health services, access to education and accommodation.

The Equality Authority is tasked with providing information and advice to any person who feels that he or she has been discriminated against on any of the grounds covered in the equality legislation, whether in an employment or non-employment area.[118]

The nine grounds on which discrimination is outlawed by the Equal Status Acts are as follows:

- Gender
- Civil Status
- Family Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Religious Belief
- Age
- Disability
- Race, Colour, Nationality, Ethnic or National Origins
- Membership of the Traveller Community

The Acts also prohibit discrimination against a person on the basis of association with another person, acting as a witness on behalf of that other person, given evidence on their behalf, legally opposing an act which is unlawful under the Act, or who has given notice of an intention to take any such actions.[119]
It is important to note that, 'Penalising a person for making a complaint of discrimination or for giving evidence in someone else's complaint or for lawfully opposing unlawful discrimination is called **victimisation** and the Equal Status Act specifically protects a person against such victimisation'.[120]
The Equal Status Acts include the Equal Status Act, 2000, the Equality Act, 2004 and the Equal Status (Amendment) Act 2012.

[118] http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Equality_FAQ#UnlawfulDiscrimination
[119] https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/What_You_Should_Know/Equal_Status/
[120] Ibid.

A 'Restated and Revised' version of the Equal Status Acts, called *The Equal Status Act 2000: Revised, Updated to 10 July 2013,* is available from the Law Reform Commission.[121]

**The following definitions[122] may be helpful**

**GENDER** A man, a woman, a transgender or a transsexual person (specific protection is provided for pregnant employees or in relation to maternity leave).

**CIVIL STATUS** means being single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, in a civil partnership within the meaning of the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act 2010 or being a former civil partner in a civil partnership that has ended by death or been dissolved;

**FAMILY STATUS** This means having responsibility either as a parent or as a person in loco parentis for someone below 18 years of age, or as a parent or resident primary carer for someone 18 years or over with a disability who requires a high degree of support and attention.

**AGE** In general this means people in employment between the ages of 18 and 65; and people in vocational training between the ages of 16 and 65.

**DISABILITY** This is broadly defined including people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION** Gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual;

**RELIGIOUS BELIEF** Includes religious background or outlook or lack of religious belief.

**RACE** Includes race, colour, nationality, ethnic or, national origin.

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY** People, who are commonly called Travellers, who are identified both by Travellers and others as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.[123]

**EMPLOYMENT**

Discrimination in the area of employment is prohibited by the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and 2004. Irish equality legislation prohibits direct and indirect discrimination in the area of employment and in the supply of and access to goods, facilities and services, on any of the following nine grounds - *gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community* as noted above.

[121] http://www.lawreform.ie/_fileupload/EN_ACT_2000_0008.PDF

[122] www.dublin15cc.com/wp-content/uploads/.../unlawful-discrimination-explained.pdf

[123] http://www.basis.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=12823&ecategory=12826&doclistid=12828&language=EN&link=link001&doc=11969&logname=The%209%20Grounds%20on%20which%20Discrimination%20is%20Unlawful%20are

# NOTES

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