

SELF-ASSESSMENT: AN INVENTORY OF YOUR ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES¹⁷

Individual Work

This inventory surveys your thoughts on various professional and ethical issues in the helping professions. Most of the items relate directly to topics that are explored in detail later in the workbook. The inventory is designed to introduce you to these issues and to stimulate your thoughts and interest. You may want to complete the inventory in more than one sitting, so that you can give each question your full concentration.

This is not a traditional multiple-choice test in which you must select the "one right answer." Rather, it is a survey of your basic beliefs, attitudes, and values on specific topics related to a career in human services. For each question, write in the letter of the response that most clearly reflects your viewpoint at this time. In many cases the answers are not mutually exclusive, and you may choose more than one response if you wish. In addition, a blank line is included for each item. You may want to use this line to provide another response more suited to your thinking or to qualify a chosen response.

Notice that there are two spaces before each item. Use the spaces on the left for your answers as you begin your exploration of values and ethics in the human service professions. After completing much of your coursework, field placements, and this workbook, you can retake this inventory using the spaces on the right and covering your initial answers so that you won't be influenced by how you originally responded. Then you can see how your attitudes have changed as a result of your development and experiences.

- B C 1. The personal characteristics of human service practitioners are
- a. not really that relevant to the helping process.
 - b. the most important variable in determining the quality of the helping process.
 - c. shaped and molded by those who teach human service practitioners.
 - d. not as important as the skills and knowledge the human service practitioners possess.
 - e. _____
- A 2. Which of the following do you consider to be the most important personal characteristic of a good human service practitioner?
- a. willingness to serve as a model for clients
 - b. courage
 - c. openness and honesty
 - d. a sense of being "centered" as a person
 - e. _____
- C 3. Concerning human service practitioners' self-disclosure to their clients, I believe that
- a. it is essential for establishing a relationship.
 - b. it is inappropriate and merely burdens the client.
 - c. it should be done rarely and only when the practitioner feels like sharing.
 - d. it is useful for human service practitioners to reveal how they feel toward their clients in the context of helping.
 - e. _____

- B 4. A client-professional relationship characterized by warmth, acceptance, caring, empathy, and respect is
- a. a necessary and sufficient condition of positive change in clients.
 - b a necessary but not sufficient condition of positive change in clients.
 - c. neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of positive change in clients.
 - d. _____
5. Of the following factors, which is the most important in determining whether helping will result in change?
- a. the kind of person the human service practitioner is
 - b. the skills and techniques the human service practitioner uses
 - c. the motivation of the client to change
 - d. the theoretical orientation of the therapist
 - e. _____
6. Of the following, which do you consider to be the most important attribute of an effective human service professional?
- a. knowledge of the theories of helping
 - b. skill in using techniques appropriately
 - c. genuineness and openness
 - d. ability to specify a treatment plan and evaluate the results
 - e. _____
- A 7. I believe that, for those who wish to become helpers, personal psychotherapy
- a should be required for licensure.
 - b. is not an important factor in developing the capacity to work with others.
 - c. should be encouraged but not required.
 - d. is needed only when the practitioner has serious problems.
 - e. _____
- D 8. I believe that, in order to help a client, a human service professional
- a. must like the client personally.
 - b. must be free of any personal conflicts in the area in which the client is working.
 - c. needs to have experienced the same problem as the client.
 - d needs to have experienced feelings similar to those being experienced by the client.
 - e. _____
- C A 9. In regard to the client-practitioner relationship, I think that
- a the practitioner should remain objective and anonymous.
 - b. the practitioner should be a friend to the client.
 - c a personal relationship, but not friendship, is essential.
 - d. a personal and warm relationship is not essential.
 - e. _____
- D 10. I should be open, honest, and transparent with my clients
- a. when I like and value them.
 - b. when I have negative feelings toward them.
 - c. rarely, if ever, so that I will avoid negatively influencing the client-helper relationship.
 - d only when it intuitively feels like the right thing to do.
 - e. _____

- A 11. I expect that I will experience professional burnout if
- ☒ a. I get involved in too many demanding projects.
 - b. I must do things in my work that aren't personally meaningful.
 - c. my personal life is characterized by conflict and struggle.
 - d. my clients complain a lot and fail to change for the better.
 - e. _____
- D B 12. I think that professional burnout
- a. can be avoided if I'm involved in personal therapy while working as a professional.
 - ☒ b. is inevitable and that I must learn to live with it.
 - c. can be lessened if I find ways to replenish and nourish myself.
 - ☒ d. may or may not occur, depending on the type of client I work with.
 - e. _____
- A B 13. If I were an intern and were convinced that my supervisor was encouraging trainees to participate in unethical behavior in an agency setting, I would
- ☒ a. first discuss the matter with the supervisor.
 - ☒ b. report the supervisor to the director of the agency.
 - c. ignore the situation for fear of negative consequences.
 - d. report the situation to the ethics committee of the state professional association.
 - e. _____
- C D 14. Practitioners who work with culturally diverse groups without having cross-cultural knowledge and skills
- a. are violating the civil rights of their clients.
 - b. are probably guilty of unethical behavior.
 - ☒ c. should realize the need for specialized training.
 - ☒ d. can be said to be practicing ethically.
 - e. _____
- D 15. If I had strong feelings, positive or negative, toward a client, I think that I would most likely
- a. discuss my feelings with my client.
 - b. keep them to myself and hope they would eventually disappear.
 - c. discuss them with a supervisor or colleague.
 - ☒ d. accept them as natural unless they began to interfere with the helping relationship.
 - e. _____
- D 16. I won't feel ready to help others until
- a. my own life is free of problems.
 - b. I've experienced helping as a client.
 - c. I feel very confident and know I'll be effective.
 - ☒ d. I've become a self-aware person and developed the ability to continually reexamine my own life and relationships.
 - e. _____
- A C 17. If a client evidenced strong feelings of attraction or dislike for me, I think that I would
- ☒ a. help the client work through these feelings and understand them.
 - b. enjoy these feelings if they were positive.
 - ☒ c. refer my client to another human service practitioner.
 - d. direct the sessions into less emotional areas.
 - e. _____

- C B 18. Practitioners who help clients whose sex, race, age, social class, or sexual orientation is different from their own
- a. will most likely not understand these clients fully.
 - (b) need to understand the differences between their clients and themselves.
 - (c) can practice unethically if they do not consider cross-cultural factors.
 - d. are probably not going to be effective with such clients because of these differences.
 - e. _____
- C D 19. When I consider being involved in the helping professions, I value most
- a. the money I expect to earn.
 - b. the security I imagine I will have in the job.
 - (c) the knowledge that I will be intimately involved with people who are searching for a better life.
 - (d) the personal growth I expect to experience through my work.
 - e. _____
- C _____ 20. If I were faced with a helping situation where it appeared that there was a conflict between ethical and legal courses to follow, I would
- a. Immediately consult with an attorney.
 - b. always choose the legal path first and foremost.
 - (c) strive to do what I believe to be ethical, even if it meant challenging a law.
 - d. refer my client to another professional.
 - e. _____
- B C 21. With respect to value judgments in helping, professionals should
- a. feel free to make value judgments about their clients' behavior.
 - (b) actively teach their own values when they think that clients need a different set of values.
 - (c) remain neutral and keep their values out of the therapeutic process.
 - d. encourage clients to question their own values and decide on the quality of their own behavior.
 - e. _____
- B C 22. Human service practitioners should
- a. teach desirable behavior and values by modeling them for clients.
 - (b) encourage clients to look within themselves to discover values that are meaningful to them.
 - (c) reinforce the dominant values of society.
 - d. very delicately, if at all, challenge clients' value systems.
 - e. _____
- A C 23. In terms of appreciating and understanding the value systems of clients who are culturally different from me,
- (a) I see it as my responsibility to learn about their values and not impose mine on them.
 - b. I would encourage them to accept the values of the dominant culture for survival purposes.
 - (c) I would attempt to modify my helping procedures to fit their cultural values.
 - d. I think it is imperative that I learn about the specific cultural values my clients hold.
 - e. _____

- C 24. If a client came to me with a problem and I could see that I would not be objective because of my values, I would
- a. accept the client because of the challenge to become more tolerant of diversity.
 - b. tell the client at the outset about my fears concerning our conflicting values.
 - ☒ c. refer the client to someone else.
 - d. attempt to influence the client to adopt my way of thinking.
 - e. _____

- C 25. I believe that the real reason for professional licensing and certification is
- a. to provide information to the public services.
 - b. to protect the public by setting minimum levels of competence for professionals.
 - ☒ c. to upgrade the helping professions by ensuring that the highest standards of excellence are promoted.
 - d. to protect the interests of various helping professions and to reduce competition.
 - e. _____

- C 26. I would tend to refer a client to another professional
- a. if I had a strong dislike for the client.
 - b. if I didn't have much experience working with the kind of problem the client presented.
 - ☒ c. if I saw my own needs and problems getting in the way of helping the client.
 - d. if the client seemed to distrust me.
 - e. _____

- A 27. My ethical position regarding the role of values in helping is that, as a professional, I should
- ☒ a. never impose my values on a client.
 - b. expose my values, without imposing them on the client.
 - c. teach my clients what I consider to be proper values.
 - d. keep my values out of the helping relationship.
 - e. _____

- B 28. If I were to counsel lesbian and gay clients, a major concern of mine would be
- a. maintaining objectivity.
 - ☒ b. not knowing and understanding enough about this lifestyle.
 - c. establishing a positive therapeutic relationship.
 - d. pushing my own values.
 - e. _____

- B C 29. Of the following, I consider the most unethical form of helper behavior to be
- a. promoting dependence in the client.
 - ☒ b. becoming sexually involved with clients.
 - ☒ c. breaking confidentiality without a good reason to do so.
 - d. accepting a client who has a problem that goes beyond one's competence.
 - e. _____

- C 30. Regarding the issue of helping friends, I think that
- a. it is seldom wise to accept a friend as a client.
 - b. it should be done rarely, and only if it is clear that the friendship will not interfere with the therapeutic relationship.
 - ☒ c. friendship and professional helping should not be mixed.
 - d. it should be done only if it seems appropriate to both the client and the human service practitioner.
 - e. _____

- A B 31. Regarding confidentiality, I believe that
- ☒ a. it is ethical to break confidence when there is reason to believe that clients may do serious harm to themselves.
 - ☒ b. it is ethical to break confidence when there is reason to believe that a client will do harm to someone else.
 - c. it is ethical to break confidence when the parents of a client ask for certain information.
 - d. it is ethical to inform the authorities when a client is breaking the law.
 - e. _____

- A C 32. Therapists should terminate therapy with a client when
- ☒ a. the client decides to do so and not before.
 - b. they judge that it is time to terminate.
 - ☒ c. it is clear that the client is not benefiting from the therapy.
 - d. the client reaches an impasse.
 - e. _____

- D 33. A sexual relationship between a former client and helper is
- a. ethical if the client initiates it.
 - b. ethical only two years after termination of therapy.
 - c. ethical only when client and practitioner discuss the issue and agree to the relationship.
 - ☒ d. never ethical, regardless of the time that has elapsed.
 - e. _____

- A 34. Concerning the issue of physically touching a client, I think that touching
- ☒ a. is unwise, because it could be misinterpreted by the client.
 - b. should be done only when the practitioner genuinely feels like doing it.
 - c. is an important part of the helping process.
 - d. is ethical when the client requests it.
 - e. _____

- A 35. A clinical supervisor has initiated sexual relationships with former students. He maintains that, because he no longer has any professional responsibility to them, this practice is acceptable. In my view, this behavior is
- ☒ a. clearly unethical, because he is using his position to initiate contacts with former students.
 - b. not unethical, because the professional relationship has ended.
 - c. not unethical but is unwise and inappropriate.
 - d. somewhat unethical, because the supervisory relationship is similar to the therapeutic relationship.
 - e. _____

- B D 36. Regarding the role of spiritual and religious values, as a professional I would be inclined to
- a. ignore such values for fear that I would impose my own beliefs on my clients.

- ☒ b. actively strive to get my clients to think about how spirituality or religion could enhance their lives.
- c. avoid bringing up the topic unless my client initiated such a discussion.
- ☒ d. conduct an assessment of my client's spiritual and religious beliefs during the intake session.
- e. _____
- A 37. In working with a family, I think that the human service practitioner
- ☒ a. is primarily responsible to the family as a unit.
- b. should focus primarily on the needs of individual members of the family.
- c. should attend to the family's needs and try to hold the amount of sacrifice by any one member to a minimum.
- d. has an ethical obligation to state his or her bias and approach at the outset.
- e. _____
38. The practice of limiting the number of therapy sessions a client is entitled to under a managed care plan is
- a. unethical as it can work against a client's best interests.
- b. a reality that I expect I'll have to accept.
- c. an example of exploitation of a client's rights.
- d. wrong because it takes away the professional's judgment in many cases.
- e. _____
- D 39. Regarding the issue of who should select the goals of helping, I believe that
- a. it is primarily the practitioner's responsibility to select goals.
- b. it is primarily the client's responsibility to select goals.
- c. the responsibility for selecting goals should be shared equally by the client and the practitioner.
- ☒ d. the question of who selects the goals depends on what kind of client is being seen.
- e. _____
- A D 40. Concerning the role of diagnosis in helping, I believe that
- ☒ a. diagnosis is essential for the planning of a treatment program.
- b. diagnosis is counterproductive for therapy, since it is based on an external view of the client.
- c. diagnosis is dangerous in that it tends to label people, who then are limited by the label.
- ☒ d. whether to use diagnosis depends on one's theoretical orientation and the kind of helping one does.
- e. _____
41. Concerning the place of testing in mental health treatment, I think that
- a. tests generally interfere with the treatment process.
- b. tests can be valuable tools if they are used as adjuncts to treatment.
- c. tests are essential for people who are seriously disturbed.
- d. tests can be either used or abused in treatment.
- e. _____
- A D 42. Regarding the issue of psychological risks associated with participation in group therapy, my position is that
- ☒ a. clients should be informed at the outset of possible risks.
- ☒ b. these risks should be minimized by careful screening.

- c. this issue is exaggerated, since there are no real risks.
 - d. careful supervision will offset some of these risks.
 - e. _____
43. Concerning the human service practitioner's responsibility to the community, I believe that
- a. the human service practitioner should educate the community concerning the nature of possible services.
 - b. the human service practitioner should attempt to change patterns that need changing.
 - c. community involvement falls outside the proper scope of helping.
 - d. human service practitioners should become involved in helping clients use the resources available in the community.
 - e. _____
- C D 44. If I were working as a human service professional in the community, the major role I would expect to play would be that of
- a. a change agent.
 - b. an advisor.
 - c. an educator or a consultant.
 - d. an advocate.
 - e. _____
- A 45. As an intern, if I thought my supervision was inadequate, I would
- a. talk to my supervisor about it.
 - b. continue to work without complaining.
 - c. seek supervision elsewhere.
 - d. feel let down by the agency I worked for.
 - e. _____
46. My view of supervision is that it is
- a. a place to get answers to difficult situations.
 - b. a threat to my status as a professional.
 - c. valuable to have when I reach an impasse with a client.
 - d. a way for me to learn about myself and to get insights into how I work with clients.
 - e. _____
- A B 47. When it comes to working within institutions, I believe that
- a. I must learn how to survive with dignity within a system.
 - b. I must learn how to subvert the system so that I can do what I deeply believe in.
 - c. the institution will stifle most of my enthusiasm and block any real change.
 - d. I can't blame the institution if I'm unable to succeed in my programs.
 - e. _____
- A 48. If my philosophy were in conflict with that of the institution I worked for, I would
- a. seriously consider whether I could ethically remain in that position.
 - b. attempt to change the policies of the institution.
 - c. agree to whatever was expected of me in that system.
 - d. quietly do what I wanted to do, even if I had to be devious about it.
 - e. _____

- A B 49. In working with clients from different ethnic groups, I think it is most important to
- ☐ a. be aware of the sociopolitical forces that have affected these clients.
 - ☒ b. understand how language can act as a barrier to effective cross-cultural helping.
 - c. refer these clients to some professional who shares their ethnic and cultural background.
 - d. help these clients modify their views so that they will be accepted and not have to suffer rejection.
 - e. _____
- D 50. To be effective in helping clients from a different culture, I think that a human service practitioner must
- a. possess specific knowledge about the particular group he or she is helping.
 - b. be able to accurately "read" nonverbal messages.
 - c. have had direct contact with this group.
 - ☒ d. treat these clients no differently from clients from his or her own cultural background.
 - e. _____

Group Work

Bring completed inventories to class so that you can compare your views. Such a comparison may stimulate some debate—which might help get the class involved in the topics to be discussed. In choosing the issues you want to discuss in class, you might go back over the inventory and circle the numbers of those items that you felt most strongly about as you were responding. Ask others how they responded to these items in particular.

NOTES

1. Adapted from *Expanding Your Experience: Exercises and Activities*, by L. Hughes (1996, p. 12).
2. Adapted from *Clinical Ethics and Values: Issues and Insights in a Changing Healthcare Environment*, by D. B. Ustul (1993, p. 25).
3. Adapted from *Expanding Your Experience* (pp. 13–14).
4. From "Validation of a Clinical Measure of Self-Esteem," by W. R. Nugent and J. W. Thomas (1993, pp. 191–207).
5. From "The Belief in Personal Control Scale: A Revised, Short Form," by J. L. Berrenberg (1987, pp. 17–22). Adapted from Hughes, 1996.
6. Adapted from *Expanding Your Experience* (p. 32).
7. Adapted from "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale," by T. H. Holmes and R. H. Rahe (1967, 213–218).
8. Adapted from *Expanding Your Experience* (pp. 61–62).
9. From *Targets: How to Set Goals for Yourself and Reach Them!* by L. Tec (1980, pp. 8–9). Adapted by Hughes, 1996.
10. Adapted from "Development of a Values Conflict Resolution Assessment," by R. T. Kinnier (1987, p. 34).
11. Adapted from *Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions*, by G. Corey, M. S. Corey, and P. Callanan (1993, pp. 15–25) and (1997, pp. 19–29).