

*Sul Ross State University*  
**Rio Grande College**  
**Counseling Program**

*Department of Education*

# **TECHNIQUES OF COUNSELING I**

EDUC 6321

3 semester credit hours

Fall Semester 2016

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## **Course Purpose**

This course will provide an experiential opportunity in professional counseling practice designed to develop communication and conceptualization skills essential to an effective and culturally relevant counseling relationship.

**Prerequisite:** *Student must have earned a grade of B or higher in EDUC 5314 and have permission of the instructor.*

## **Course Objectives**

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and demonstrate basic listening and influencing skills necessary to initiate and maintain an effective counseling interview. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Midterm Skill Evaluation, the Final Skill Evaluation, and instructor observation of classroom participation.*
2. Assess the unique counseling needs of the client, incorporating various the data from various formal and informal assessments. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Clinical Appraisal Report, the Midterm Skill Evaluation, the Final Skill Evaluation, and the Objective Final Examination.*
3. Identify and describe the essential characteristics and qualities of an effective counseling relationship. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Midterm Skill Evaluation, the Final Skill Evaluation, the Objective Final Examination, the personal Blogs, and instructor observation of classroom participation.*
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of counseling skills, techniques, and interventions at the beginning counselor level. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Midterm Skill Evaluation, the Final Skill Evaluation, the Clinical Supervision Reports, the personal Blogs, the spontaneous assignments, the Objective Final Examination, and instructor observation of classroom participation.*
5. Describe and discuss the ethical and professional foundations on which the effective counseling relationship is based. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Midterm Skill Evaluation, the Final Skill Evaluation, the spontaneous assignments, the Clinical Supervision Reports, the Objective Final Examination, and instructor observation of classroom participation.*
6. Demonstrate and discuss the fundamental features of his or her own dynamic and evolving integrated Personal Approach to counseling and psychotherapy. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Final Skill Evaluation, the Clinical Supervision Reports, the personal Blogs, and instructor observation of classroom participation.*
7. Demonstrate professional commitment and personal growth. *Assessment of this objective will be conducted by the Midterm Skill Evaluation, the Proof of Degree Plan, the Final Skill Evaluation, the personal Blogs, the spontaneous assignments, and instructor observation of classroom participation.*

## **Readings**

There are no required texts for this course; however there is an abundance of required reading that will be posted and available to students on Blackboard. Students are expected to remain current with the posted readings, articles, handout materials, videos and presentations on Blackboard. Additionally, there may be brief spontaneous assignments for students to locate valuable counseling-related resources to share with the class.

## **Class Sessions and Time Demands**

This class will meet on Monday evenings, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., in Uvalde in B109. Class sessions will include fishbowl demonstrations, debriefing, discussion, role-play, and skill rehearsal. Additionally, all students are expected to attend and participate in at least **twelve** (approximately once per week throughout the semester) triad practice sessions outside of class. These practice and rehearsal sessions typically take between two and three hours and are scheduled outside of class at the convenience of the triad (or quadrad) members. Practice Triads (3 or four students) consist of a counselor, a client, and an observer (or two observers). All triad practice sessions must be video recorded for the purposes of supervision and evaluation. All recordings must be done via digital video cameras so that videos are in digital format (computer compatible). The video and audio qualities must be clear, distinct, unambiguous and without distractions. Digital recording will allow you to store your sessions on your computer, and supervisors will be able to conduct clinical supervision in person or via Skype, Face Time or other virtual meeting platforms. All students are expected to participate in at least **twelve** one-hour weekly clinical supervision sessions with Clinical Supervisors who will be assigned during the second class session. Students who are not able to comply with these strenuous requirements must drop this course immediately. Students are expected to participate in the following minimum number of hours per week:

- three hours of class (“*fishbowl*”)
- three hours of triad practice and debriefing
- two hours of reading and academic study
- two hours of self-evaluation and skill review
- one hour of clinical supervision
- one hour of mindfulness practice

**= twelve (12) hours total per week**

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

*regular attendance and participation	50 points
*mindful observation blog and mindfulness practice log	50 points
*evaluation and progress reports by clinical supervisors	20 points
*clinical appraisal report due via email on 11/14	20 points
*midterm skill evaluation on 10/17	60 points
*final skill evaluation on 11/28	100 points
*objective final examination due online by 12/8	100 points

According to this scale, there are 400 total points possible on which your final course grade will be based. A final point total of 360 or greater will earn you a final grade of A, a total of 320-359 will be a final grade of B, and a total of 280-319 will be a final grade of C, which is not acceptable for advancing to *Techniques of Counseling II* (EDUC 6322). If you earn a final grade of C or less, you will be invited to enroll in Techniques I again at a later time with a different group of learners. You will have the opportunity to repeat the course and improve your performance. **Regardless of the excuse, late assignments will be discounted in point value at 10% of the total points possible per day of lateness.**

# PROPOSED COURSE OUTLINE

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS DUE, and READINGS</b>
August 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>*Introductions</li><li>*Course Overview and Expectations</li><li>*Overcoming Obstacles</li><li>*Dynamics and Characteristics of Emotional Intensity</li><li>*Counseling as Intense Personal Relationship</li><li>***Blackboard: Readings and Blog</li></ul>
August 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>*Conceptualizing Counseling</li><li>*Challenging Fears</li><li>*Introduction to Mindfulness</li><li>*Fishbowl and Debriefing Structures</li><li>*Development of Effective Observation Skills</li><li>***Blackboard: Readings and Blog</li></ul>
September 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>**No Class: Labor Day!</b></li><li>***Blackboard: Readings and Blog</li></ul>
September 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>*Art of Counseling</li><li>*Helping Relationship</li><li>*Attending Skills</li><li>*Maintaining Mindful Presence</li><li>***Blackboard: Readings and Blog</li></ul>
September 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>*Listening Skills</li><li>*Encouraging</li><li>*Paraphrasing</li><li>*Summarizing</li><li>*Supportive Silence</li><li>*Practicing Mindful Listening</li><li>***Blackboard: Readings and Blog</li></ul>
September 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>*Understanding the Client</li><li>*Observation Skills</li><li>*Selective Responding</li><li>*Gentle Mindful Awareness and Observation</li><li>***Blackboard: Readings and Blog</li></ul>



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November 21      \*Termination of Counseling Relationship  
                     \*Client Conceptualization  
                     \*Process of Supervision  
                     \*Mindfulness in Clinical Supervision  
                     \*Final Fishbowl and Last Class Experience  
                     \*\*\*Blackboard: Readings and Blog

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November 23-25    **\*\*Thanksgiving Holiday**

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November 28      **\*\*Final Skill Evaluations** (*triads scheduled for specific time*)  
                     \*\*\*Blackboard: Readings and Blog

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December 5      \*Overview of **Techniques of Counseling II** (EDUC 6322)  
                     \*Individual Learning Contracts  
                     \*Termination Rituals  
                     **\*\*Objective Final Examination Online**  
                     **\*\*Mindful Observation Blog**

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## **Remember these important dates:**

<b>August 22</b>	Class begins and last day to add EDUC 6321 or EDUC 7315.
<b>August 25</b>	Last day for late registration and schedule changes.
<b>September 5</b>	Labor Day Holiday: No Class.
<b>October 17</b>	Mid-Semester.
<b>October 17</b>	Midterm Skill Evaluations will be conducted.
<b>November 2-5</b>	TCA 2016 Conference in Dallas.
<b>November 11</b>	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University.
<b>November 14</b>	Clinical Appraisal Report is due.
<b>November 23-25</b>	Thanksgiving Holiday.
<b>November 28</b>	Final Skill Evaluations will be conducted.
<b>December 5</b>	Final Class Meeting and Termination.
<b>December 8</b>	Objective Final Exam must be completed online.
<b>December 10</b>	Fall Commencement in Uvalde at 7:30 p.m.

# ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

## Attendance and Participation

All students are expected to attend class regularly and on time. Tardiness and absenteeism have extreme detrimental effects on both learning and counseling skill rehearsal. Additionally, all students are expected to attend and participate in at least **twelve** (approximately once per week throughout the semester) triad practice group sessions. These practice and rehearsal sessions typically take about 90 minutes to two hours and are scheduled outside of class at the convenience of the triad members. Practice Triads consist of a counselor, a client, and an observer or two observers. All triad practice sessions must be video recorded for the purpose of supervision and evaluation. Furthermore, all students are expected to attend and participate in regular weekly individual clinical supervision sessions (minimum of 12 individual supervision sessions) with a Clinical Supervisor.

The Triad Practice Group sessions typically require that about three hours of time be scheduled outside of class at the convenience of the triad members. Practice Triads consist of a counselor, a client, and one observer or two observers. Immediately following a brief (20-45 minutes) counseling session, the observers share feedback with the counselor on his/her performance. The focus of observation and debriefing is on the skill and conceptualization of the counselor and not the content (storyline) of the client. When one counselor-client practice session is complete and feedback has been given, everyone rotates to a new position until each member of the triad has been in each of the different roles. If you are part of a "four person triad" ("quadrad" or quartet), there will be two observers (A & B), and every member will serve as observer twice. All triad practice sessions must be video taped for the purpose of clinical supervision and graded evaluation. You will need to have access to a digital video camera for recording the triad counseling sessions. During the first two weeks of the semester, you must become comfortable and confident with uploading your video recorded counseling sessions to various external and/or portable drives. You might also want to learn how to post private videos on Vimeo for easy access.

All students are required to turn off or completely silence electronic devices such as cell phones, iPhones, and laptop computers. Any student who uses such electronic devices in class, or allows such instruments to make any sound during the class time frame, will be asked to leave class for that evening and will lose 20 points from the attendance and participation score. Notetaking during fishbowl observation must be done the "old fashioned way." If a student's job requires him/her to be "on call" then such arrangements should be discussed and planned in advance with the instructor.

Missing a class meeting for any reason will result in the deduction of **20 points** from the attendance and participation score, **regardless of the excuse**. Additionally, missing a scheduled triad practice session, or a clinical supervision session, will result in the deduction of 10 points from the attendance and participation score, **regardless of the excuse**. There will be no opportunities for making up missed class sessions. Participation in the class is measured by one's willingness and courage to take risks. *You will be invited and encouraged to leave your egos and your performance anxieties at the door!* Participation is evaluated by the instructors on a subjective basis. Attendance and participation are worth a total of **50 points**.

## Mindful Observation Blog

All students are required to maintain Mindful Observation Blogs on the class Blackboard site. This requirement exists for both *Techniques of Counseling I* (EDUC 6321) and *Group Counseling* (EDUC 7315), so students must be mindful to keep content and observations separate, unless otherwise appropriate. These blogs are documentations and demonstrations of personal growth, struggle, awareness and professional/academic understanding. Additionally, the blogs must include a running log of individual mindfulness practices. Blogs should include cognitive and affective responses to class topics, fishbowl demonstrations, and discussions. The blogs should include at least twice-weekly entries based on the events and experiences of that week's fishbowl, triad practice work, supervision experiences, and personal mindfulness practices.

During the first week of the semester you will have access to the blog section on the class Blackboard site. Do not use the reply button to post additional entries to your own blog. Only use the reply button when you are commenting on someone else's blog entry. To edit and/or modify your blog, simply use the appropriate buttons. Always start your blog entry with the date and time of your most recent journal entry. Post your most recent entries first before your older entries. Therefore, when we open your blog we will always see your latest and most recent entry first followed by all your previous postings. At various points throughout the semester, the Instructors will provide feedback to individuals regarding the content and depth of the journal blog entries. Respond to the instructor's feedback or prompts in the body of your blog as opposed to a "reply" posting.

You are required to comment on other students' blogs by posting relevant replies and reactions to their blog postings. In your initial blog entry, which must be made on or before **Friday, August 26, 2016**, please share some information about yourself so that we can get somewhat acquainted with one another. Please tell us your name, and then something about your various roles in life (family, work, social, leisure). You can post relevant photos of yourself and those who are most important in your life. Also, please tell us why you are in the Counseling Program and what you would like to do with your degree and/or training in the Counseling field. Finally, please share with us what you expect to get from this class.

The purpose of the Mindful Observation Blog is two-fold:

1. To help make sense of what you are learning about yourself, others, the counseling process, mindfulness, and genuine authenticity.
2. To encourage you to interact with one another regarding the sensitive issues of pain, sorrow, grief, anger, self-loathing and fear in counseling.

Blog entries can include personal thoughts, feelings, insights, and reflections; questions or concerns that arise as a result of various experiences or course readings; primary lessons learned about self, others, and content; applications of concepts and strategies to the counseling relationship and process; thoughts that aren't yet fully formed, but that you want to refine later; and the logging of your times and experiences with your own personal mindfulness practices. This could include your feelings about the course and your progress in it, and theories that are developing in your mind relevant to counseling skills and the role of the counselor. The Mindful Observation Blogs are evaluated by the instructors on a subjective basis. Thorough and insightfully documented blogs are worth a total of **50 points** toward your final grade in this course.



## Objective Final Examination

All students are expected to satisfactorily complete a 100-point objective final examination that is based on the readings (posted articles and handouts), resources, and class experiences during the entire semester. The examination items will expect you to integrate course content with the readings, and will consist of one hundred objective items (multiple-choice and true/false). The final examination will be available online for five days prior to its deadline of **December 8, 2016** at 11:55 pm. This examination is worth a total of **100 points** toward your final grade in the course.

## Clinical Supervision

All students are expected to engage in weekly clinical supervision meetings with a Clinical Supervisor (assigned by the Instructors). These weekly one-hour supervision sessions will be individual, and a minimum of **twelve sessions** are required during the course of the semester. All **Techniques I** students will be assigned to an individual clinical supervisor by the second night of class. (Students cannot select their own clinical supervisor.) You are required to submit to your clinical supervisor (and copy Joselyn and Alyssa), at least 24 hours in advance of your supervision meeting, the completed "*Weekly Self-Assessment for Clinical Supervision*" form. Thus at the end of semester, the Instructors will have a complete record of your twelve weekly supervision sessions. The clinical supervisors will submit to the Instructors an evaluation of the supervisee's counseling performance at the end of the supervision relationship (refer to the *Clinical Assessment of Counselor Skill* evaluation form). Additionally, the clinical supervisors will maintain regular contact with Alyssa, Joselyn and Dr. Russell informing them of your growth and development. These self-assessments, progress reports, and final evaluation by the clinical supervisor are worth a total of **20 points** toward your final grade in this course.

# Clinical Appraisal Report

All students are expected to complete a Clinical Appraisal Report on the most important client in the world: **Self**. The primary objective of this assignment is to assist you in interpreting and integrating formal and informal assessment data into the client's treatment plan and the counseling relationship. The purpose of the Clinical Appraisal Report is to assess your potential effectiveness and success in the career field of Counseling. Students will be required to engage in various methods of self-assessment to collect appraisal data on the self, and then write a concise, but comprehensive, *Clinical Appraisal Report*. All students are **required** to incorporate all scaled scores and percentiles (e.g., Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, Analytical Writing) from the general *Graduate Record Examination* (GRE). Thus, if you have not yet taken the GRE, you must do so immediately or you will not have sufficient time to receive all your scores. Writing scores are sent to examinees about four to six weeks after completion of the examination.

In this *Clinical Appraisal Report*, you must report your standard scores and percentiles for the three major areas: Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical Writing. More importantly, you must provide a thorough clinical interpretation of the obtained scores. (Refer to both empirical and clinical research articles for comprehensive clinical interpretation of your GRE scores.) You are required to interpret the scores in light of the purpose of the *Clinical Appraisal Report*. Students must incorporate other assessment data available to them, including standardized test scores (MBTI, MMPI, TExES), academic grades, behavioral observations, projective techniques, dream journals, personal histories, and other sources of assessment and appraisal data. The *Clinical Appraisal Report* is worth a total of **20 points** toward your final grade and is due, via email, to all three Instructors, on or before **November 14, 2016**. The clinical report must be written professionally in the third-person (as if you were writing about your client). *Clinical Appraisal Reports* are typically about seven or more pages in length (single-spaced). Use the following outline **exactly** for writing your *Clinical Appraisal Report*:

**Client Name:** Indicate your full name.

**Client Contact Information:** Include your address, phone numbers, and email.

**Date of Birth:** Indicate your date of birth.

**Age:** Indicate your age at time of report.

**Tests Administered:** Indicate the standardized tests (e.g., GRE) you took and the dates you took them.

**Behavioral Observations During Testing:** Indicate your physical and emotional behavior during the administrations of the standardized tests.

**Other Assessment Data:** Indicate the other sources of self-assessment data and the methods in which the data were obtained.

**Background Information:** Include as much information as is relevant to addressing the issue of potential effectiveness and success in the career field of Counseling.

**Standardized Test Results:** Include both the quantitative information (standard scores and percentiles) and descriptive information about your standardized test scores (e.g., GRE scores), as well as a thorough clinical interpretation of the obtained scores.

**Other Assessment Results:** Include both a description and clinical interpretation of the data obtained through other sources of self-assessment.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** Include a summary of your assessment interpretations, as well as a thorough response to the issue of your potential effectiveness and success in the career field of Counseling.

## Midterm Skill Evaluation

All students are expected to engage in regular skill practice outside of class with an assigned triad of fellow students. On the first night of class all students will form practice triads. The purpose of these small groups of three or four is to practice the basic counseling skills and provide mindful feedback and support to one another. Students will need to obtain a digital video camera for recording of all practice counseling sessions. For security and confidentiality reasons, it is best to store your counseling sessions (where you are the counselor) on a separate external drive or your own private laptop.

For the Midterm Skill Evaluations, students must bring a video (at least 20 minutes) of a specific triad counseling session to be evaluated by the Instructors. The Midterm Skill Evaluations will be scheduled for **October 17, 2016**, in two-hour intervals, from 2:00 p.m. through 10:00 p.m., and will be worth **60 points** toward your final grade in this course.

The following evaluation criteria will be used:

1. Counselor effectively employed attending skills.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Counselor communicated concern and empathy.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Counselor mindfully attended to client themes and messages.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Counselor paraphrased and summarized client content.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Counselor reflected client affect in a mindful fashion.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Counselor personalized client content.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Counselor used only minimal questions.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Counselor employed an appropriate sense of timing.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Counselor demonstrated mindfulness and insight.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Counselor accurately evaluates own effectiveness.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Midterm Skill Evaluations will be conducted throughout the afternoon and evening on the scheduled date. There will be no class meeting on the night of skill evaluations. Students will attend the evaluation at a scheduled time. All Midterm Skill Evaluations will be conducted in Dr. Russell's office. Triads will be assigned to a specific time slot on that evening. Evaluations require about two hours and will be conducted with only the members of the triad and the three Instructors present.

## Final Skill Evaluation

All students are expected to engage in regular skill practice outside of class with an assigned triad of fellow students (meeting a minimum of twelve times as a triad). The purpose of these small groups is to practice the basic counseling skills and provide feedback and support to one another. Students will need to obtain a video camera for recording of all practice counseling sessions.

For the Final Skill Evaluations, students must bring a video (at least 40 minutes in length) of a triad counseling session to be evaluated by the Instructors. It is highly recommended that you bring your best work for the Instructors to evaluate. The Final Skill Evaluation is worth **100 points** toward your final grade in this course and will be scheduled on **November 28, 2016**.

The following evaluation criteria will be used:

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1. Counselor effectively employed attending skills.           | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 2. Counselor communicated mindful empathy.                    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 3. Counselor paraphrased and summarized client content.       | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 4. Counselor personalized client content.                     | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 5. Counselor reflected client affect in a mindful fashion.    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 6. Counselor used only minimal questions.                     | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 7. Counselor effectively employed various influencing skills. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 8. Counselor employed an appropriate sense of timing.         | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 9. Counselor maintained authentic and genuine interaction.    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 10. Counselor demonstrated emerging mindful approach.         | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Final Skill Evaluations will be conducted throughout the late afternoon and evening on the scheduled date. Triads will be assigned to a specific time slot. Evaluations require about two hours and will be conducted with only the members of the triad and the three Instructors present.

# Professional Counseling Identity and Behavior

In registering for classes in the Counseling Program at Rio Grande College, graduate students accept responsibility for attending scheduled class meetings, completing assignments on time, contributing to class discussions, and fully participating in all experiential learning activities. Counseling faculty members maintain specific attendance and participation requirements for each particular class. Faculty members may impose academic penalties upon absences from some classes and/or experiences; however, such penalties for absences will be a part of each course syllabus and will be distributed to each class at the beginning of each class and a copy filed in the departmental office.

The Counseling Program has specific policies and procedures which provide students with a sequential, growth-oriented progression of courses to take; students are fully responsible for knowing and following these policies and procedures. This is not a singular academic program to prepare students for advanced levels of teaching or beginning levels of administration, but rather a distinctly different profession entirely. Counseling is not an appropriate career field for all students. In the process of pursuing professional training in counseling, some students discover (or faculty may advise) that they are not appropriate for the counseling field, nor is the field of counseling appropriate for them. Faculty of the Counseling Program will provide continuous, honest and pragmatic feedback to each student regarding progress and suitability in this program.

Unethical behavior (as defined by the *Code of Ethics* of the American Counseling Association; refer to Appendix C) by a student enrolled in any counseling course will result in the exclusion of that student from the Counseling Program of Rio Grande College, and may subject the student to civil penalties as well. Professional behavior is expected of each and every student at all times across all counseling courses. Failure to maintain professionalism is considered unethical behavior.

The Counseling Program emphasizes professional, personal, and academic development as essential in counselor education and training. Students must not only excel academically, but must adhere to the professional and ethical standards of the profession, demonstrate effective counseling skills and competencies, and attend to their own personal development as it impacts their ability to work effectively and ethically as counseling professionals.

Counseling students are expected to attend to their own social and emotional development through extensive self-reflection and mindfulness. They must be open to new and divergent ideas, willing to examine their own values and assumptions, able to receive critical feedback, and capable of engaging in personal growth and transformation. At times this will involve examining one's own life experiences and facing one's own emotional issues. Willingness to do this important personal work is an integral part of any counselor's training.

Therefore, graduation from the Counseling Program requires that students successfully complete the academic and experiential requirements with mindful regard to both professional and personal development. Students must, in the professional judgment of the faculty, understand and behave in accordance with the professional and ethical standards, meet the requisite counseling competencies and skills to work as an effective professional counselor, and be free from any psychological or emotional impairment that may act as a barrier to effective

professional practice. Throughout the counseling course work and the practical experiences, the faculty members regularly review student progress on the following basic qualities:

- Openness to new ideas
- Flexibility
- Cooperativeness with others
- Willingness to accept and use feedback
- Awareness of own impact on others
- Ability to deal with conflict
- Ability to accept personal responsibility
- Ability to express feelings effectively and appropriately
- Attention to ethical and legal considerations
- Initiative and motivation
- Development of professional skills and competencies
- Psychological functioning and mindful self-management

It is the personal and professional responsibility of each and every graduate student in the **Counseling Program** of Rio Grande College to be familiar with the most current issue of the **Counseling Program Handbook**. This document details and describes all aspects of the Counseling Program, from taking the first courses to passing the Comprehensive Oral Examination and graduating with the Master's in Counseling.

Unethical behavior (as defined by the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice* of the American Counseling Association) by a student enrolled in any counseling course will result in the exclusion of that student from the Counseling Program of Rio Grande College, and may subject the student to civil penalties as well. Professional behavior is expected of each and every student at all times across all counseling courses. Failure to maintain professionalism is considered unethical behavior.

## **Distance Education Statement**

Although *Techniques of Counseling I* (EDUC 6321) is an experiential in-person course, a sizable portion of the full experience of this course will take place on Blackboard. Required readings, assignments, blogs, presentations, and videos will be posted on Blackboard. All students are expected to regularly access the class site on Blackboard and participate fully in the virtual aspect of this course.

**The policy on Distance Education at Rio Grande College is as follows:** Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

## **Accessibility and Safe Learning Environment**

The Counseling Program of Rio Grande College is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from intentional or unintentional sexual harassment, as defined below, or harassment on the basis of any protected classification including, but not limited to race, gender, color, religion, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, veteran status or on any other basis protected by law. Such conduct is unprofessional, unproductive, illegal, and generally unacceptable. All conduct of this nature is expressly prohibited, regardless of whether it violates the law.

The Counseling Program of Rio Grande College supports equal employment and educational opportunities for all persons. No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by Rio Grande College on any basis prohibited by applicable law, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability.

The Counseling Program is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Disability Services Coordinator assists students with disabilities in gaining opportunities for full participation in programs, services and activities. The Disability Services Coordinator is the Director of Student Services (830-758-5006) in Eagle Pass, Texas. Services available to all students include consultation, information and referral as well as personal counseling and academic advising. A student is eligible for disability services if s/he has been admitted to Rio Grande College and has a documented physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Qualified students with disabilities who need academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services or other accommodations to ensure equal access must register with Disability Services. It is the student's responsibility to bring disability documentation with them to an appointment with the Disability Services Coordinator to discuss their individual needs at this time. Each request is considered on an individualized, case-by-case basis. As considerable time may be involved in obtaining complete and adequate documentation and arranging for qualified service providers, prospective and current students should request services in a timely manner. These services should be requested well in advance of the anticipated need.

Recent disability documentation from appropriate qualified professionals must be provided by the student to establish current functional limitations and the impact of the disability. Any recommendations for specific accommodations may be helpful in making determinations and these will be considered as part of the documentation review process. Documentation of disability status and other related information is handled in a confidential manner and is maintained in files separate from a student's educational record.

In compliance with applicable laws, unless Rio Grande College can demonstrate that an academic requirement is an essential component of a degree or program, the University will make reasonable adjustments to requirements to ensure that the requirements do not discriminate against qualified students with disabilities. A student with a disability may request a course substitution or a modification of a degree or program requirement through the following process.

The student's first point of contact for assistance with this process should be the Disability Services Coordinator. The student should submit:

1. A written request for the modification explaining his/her difficulties in the relevant areas and reasons for requesting the modification;
2. Information about the results of previous efforts in the relevant area (transcripts, etc.); and
3. Comprehensive documentation of the disability and the specific aspects of the disability which impair the student's ability to learn or perform in the area in which the student is requesting the modification. The Disability Services Coordinator will meet with the student, review the documentation and prepare a recommendation on the request.
  - a. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability, date of the current diagnostic evaluation (within a 5 year period), and the date of the original diagnosis.
  - b. A description of the diagnostic criteria and/or diagnostic test(s) used.
  - c. A description of the current functional impact/limitations of the disability.
  - d. Treatments, medications, assistive devices/services currently prescribed or used.
  - e. A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability over time.
  - f. The credentials of the diagnosing professional(s) to include the training and experience which enable the person capable of making the diagnoses.

Recommendations for accommodation are helpful and will be given due consideration. If a student feels that s/he has been discriminated against based on disability, it is recommended that the student first attempt to resolve the issue directly with the individual or group suspected of discrimination. If this procedure is non-productive, a second step may be to seek assistance from the Disability Services office. Students may also file a complaint with the appropriate university officer for ADA/504 compliance, the ADA Compliance Officer, according to the student grievance procedure.

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances; demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies; leering; whistling; touching; pinching; assault; coerced sexual acts; suggestive, insulting or obscene comments or gestures. The Counseling Program prohibits all conduct of this nature whether or not such conduct violates any applicable laws.



# Observer Feedback Form

Observer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** The peer observer is to indicate his/her feedback for each item by providing specific remarks that will help the student counselor in his/her skill development.

**Opening:** Was the opening comfortable, friendly, and pleasant? Any role definition needed? Any introduction needed?

*Feedback Comments:*

**Rapport:** Did student counselor establish good rapport with client? Was the stage set for a productive counseling session?

*Feedback Comments:*

**Interaction:** Were the client and student counselor really communicating in a meaningful manner? If the client was nonverbal, were the student counselor and client meaningfully engaged?

*Feedback Comments:*

**Acceptance:** Was the student counselor accepting of the client's emotions, feelings, thoughts, and values? Were attempts made to impose counselor values during the session?

*Feedback Comments:*

**Reflection of Feeling:** Did the student counselor reflect and react to feelings or did the counseling session remain on an intellectual level?

*Feedback Comments:*

**Counselor Responses:** Were the student counselor responses appropriate in view of what the client was expressing or were responses concerned with trivia and minutia? Did the student counselor limit him/herself to only minimal and strategic use of questions?

*Feedback Comments:*

**Counselor Relationship:** Was an effective counseling relationship established? Was the counselor-client relationship conducive to productive counseling?

*Feedback Comments:*

**Closing:** Was the session closed in an effective and sensitive manner? Was it too abrupt or brusque?

*Feedback Comments:*

**General Techniques:** How well did the student counselor conduct the mechanics of the counseling session? Did the student counselor effectively use silences? Was the vocabulary appropriate? Where the interventions appropriate?

*Feedback Comments:*

# **Fishbowl Observation Guidelines**

## **Attending Skills**

- Visual Cues and Eye Contact
- Vocal Qualities
- Verbal Tracking and Selective Attention
- Gestures, Posture and Proximity

## **Listening Skills**

- Encouraging
- Paraphrasing
- Summarizing
- Personalizing
- Client Focusing

## **Observation Skills**

- Observing Client Behavior
- Observing Content Themes

## **Affective Skills**

- Rapport
- Working Alliance
- Reflection of Feeling
- Empathy

## **Intervention Skills**

- Minimal Interrogation
- Avoidance of Advice
- Avoidance of Judgment
- Working Hypothesis
- Confrontation
- Influencing Skills

## **Fishbowl Observation Form**

**Directions:** Every class session in *Techniques of Counseling I* will involve at least one fishbowl demonstration of counseling. Each evening the Instructors will select at least one student at random to be the client in the fishbowl while Dr. Russell serves as the counselor. In the absence of Dr. Russell, Alyssa and/or Joselyn will conduct the fishbowl counseling sessions. All fishbowl observers are required to complete a **Fishbowl Observation Form** for each fishbowl session. Use this form to record your observations, questions, concerns and insights.

### **Attending Skills**

- What did you observe about the counselor's eye contact with the client?
- Did you observe the counselor disengage eye contact with the client for a therapeutic reason?
- How would you describe the counselor's vocal qualities?
- What might be helpful or harmful about the counselor's vocal qualities?
- In what ways did you observe the counselor's process of verbal tracking?
- Did you observe the counselor engage in selective attention or selective non-attention?
- How would you describe the counselor's gestures, postures, and proximity?
- In what ways did the counselor "teach" the client that the counseling relationship is unlike all other social relationships?

## **Listening Skills**

- In what ways did you observe the counselor engaging in mindful listening of the client?
  
- Did you observe the counselor employ encouragers, paraphrases or summaries? Where they therapeutic, detrimental, or simply “plops?” How can you tell?
  
- In what ways did the counselor personalize client content? Were these interventions therapeutic, detrimental, or simply “plops?” How can you tell?
  
- Where were the primary focal points of the counselor?

## **Observation Skills**

- ✓ How could you tell that the counselor was mindfully observing the client’s behaviors?
  
- ✓ Did the counselor miss a key observation?
  
- ✓ How could you tell that the counselor was mindfully observing the client’s internal processes?
  
- ✓ Did the counselor miss any key client processes?

## **Affective Skills**

- ♥ In what ways did the counselor establish rapport with the client?
- ♥ Was there a working alliance between the counselor and the client? How do you know?
- ♥ In what ways did the counselor demonstrate mindful reflection of client affect? Did the counselor miss important opportunities to reflect feeling?
- ♥ In what ways did you observe the presence of empathy? What was the counselor feeling? How might you know this?
- ♥ How would you describe the atmosphere of this intimate relationship?

## **Intervention Skills**

- How often did the counselor engage in interrogation or the use of questions?
- What strategies were emphasized by the counselor instead of questioning?
- Did the counselor assume a “one up” position by offering advice or judgment? If the client asked for advice, opinion or judgment, how did the counselor respond? Were these interventions therapeutic, detrimental, or simply “plops?” How can you tell?
- Did the counselor appear to be guided by an internal “working hypothesis?” If so why? If not, why not?
- In what ways did the counselor employ mindful conflict or confrontation? Were these interventions therapeutic, detrimental, or simply “plops?” How can you tell?
- What other advanced skills, influencing skills, or theoretically-specific skills did you observe? What was your reaction to them?

# **Weekly Self-Assessment for Clinical Supervision**

**Directions:** For each clinical supervision session, type a one page self-assessment of your counseling skills pertaining to the session to be viewed in supervision. Self-assessments must be emailed to your clinical supervisor (and the three instructors), in *Microsoft Word*, at least one day prior to the scheduled supervision meeting.

**Date of Counseling Session:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Counseling Session #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Performance: 0    1    2    3    4    5**  
(Please rate your performance on a scale from 0 to 5, with 5 being the best)

**SUMMARY OF SESSION:**

**TECHNIQUES UTILIZED/ATTEMPTED:**

**AREAS TO IMPROVE/FOCUS ON:**

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/CONCERNS:**

# Clinical Assessment of Counselor Skill

*Completed By Individual Clinical Supervisor*

Student-Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clinical Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. Counselor demonstrated effective attending skills.<br>2   | 0 | 1 |   |
| 2. Counselor observed client behavior and responded appropriately.<br>2                                | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 3. Counselor communicated concern and empathy.<br>2  | 0 | 1 |   |
| 4. Counselor employed effective listening skills.<br>2   | 0 | 1 |   |
| 5. Counselor elicited and reflected client affect appropriately.<br>2                                  | 0 | 1 |   |
| 6. Counselor avoided questioning and interrogation.<br>2   | 0 | 1 |   |
| 7. Counselor employed appropriate theoretically specific "influencing" techniques.<br>2                | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 8. Counselor shared openly during supervision session and made effective use of supervision time.<br>2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 9. Counselor maintained open and nondefensive attitude when receiving feedback.<br>2                   | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 10. Counselor demonstrated an appropriate level of personal and professional insight.<br>2             | 0 | 1 | 2 |

**Rating Scale:** A rating of 0 indicates no demonstration of skill area when it was required; 1 indicates improvement needed in skill area; and 2 indicates appropriate and satisfactory demonstration of skill area.

***Briefly describe the specific strengths and weaknesses of the Techniques I student-counselor:***