

Introduction to Assessment

COUN 5760



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Overview

- Why do Counselors Need to Know about Assessment?
- Historical Perspectives
- Review of Statistical Concepts related to Assessment
- Review of Ethical Code related to Assessment
- Importance of reading manuals
- When and Why Would Counselors Use Assessments?
- Role of Diagnosing in Assessment

Why do counselors need to know about assessments?

- Exercise their privilege to administer/interpret assessments
- Likely you will need to read/interpret assessments for child clients
- Confidence to ask for evaluation results/reports
- Social-emotional impact of learning differences
- Functional consequences of medical and psychological disorders
- Unique strengths counselors bring (vs. diagnosticians and psychologists)

Definition and Historical Perspectives

- A Comprehensive problem-solving process
 - Problem clarification, diagnosis, classification, intervention planning and evaluation
- Nomothetic v. Idiographic approaches to scientific inquiry
- Testing v. Assessment- means to an end (examples)
- Components of a quality assessment (methods, sources, settings)
- Importance of theoretical grounding
 - Conceptualizing, interventions,
- Holistic view of clients

Review of Statistical Concepts related to Assessment

- Bell Curve handout
- Percentile Ranks
- Validity and Reliability
- Measures of Central Tendency
- Measures of Variation
- Grade equivalents
- Norm referenced vs. Criterion referenced tests
- Importance of reading manuals
 - Administration, scoring, characteristics of samples, definitions of scales, ranges
 - Validity, reliability

Percentile Rank

- The Percentile is the point in a distribution at or below which a given percentage of scores is found.
- The 75th percentile is the point at or below which 75 percent of scores fall.
- Percentile Rank of a score is the percentage of scores less than or equal to that score. It is a point on the percentile scale.
- Often used; easy to interpret

Validity and Reliability

- Validity-
 - implies precise and exact results acquired from the data collected. Necessary conclusions to be drawn from the sample that are generalizable to the entire population.
 - To be valid, it must be reliable
 - Does it measure what it is supposed to measure?
- Reliability-
 - Consistency in measurement (test-retest, inter-rater)
 - Possible to have reliability and not have validity

Measures of Central Tendency

- Mode- most frequent score in a distribution
- Median- the 50th percentile; or the point on the scale below which 50 percent of the scores fall.
- Mean- the average of the scores in a distribution

Measures of Variation

- Lengths of intervals that indicate how the scores are spread throughout the distribution.
- Standard Deviation- used to describe the variability of a distribution of scores
 - A large standard deviation =large amount of variability of scores around the mean
 - A small standard deviation indicates little variability
- Standard scores- use standard deviation as the unit of measure and describe the relative position of a single score in the entire distribution. They make raw scores useable and meaningful.

Grade Equivalent Scores

- Status score and Growth score
- Where a student's score falls along a continuum
- Grade and month (assume 10 months in school year) ex. 7.8 (7th grade, 10th month)
- If a 3rd grader scored a 6.6 GE, her **raw** score is the same as the raw score of a typical 6th grade student in the 6th month of school.
- NO 6th grade content was on the 3rd grader's test
- Not an indication of where the child should be placed in school!!!

Norm v. Criterion Referenced tests

- Norm-referenced: scores plotted along the normal distribution (bell curve)
- Criterion-referenced: scores compared to an established unit of measure

Review of Ethical code Related to Assessment

Qualifications for Administration of Assessments:

- Licensure, educational/degree, experiential, continuing education
 - [WPS](#) qualifications
 - [Pearson](#) qualifications
- LPC ethical mandates
 - Pages 10, 11, and 17 of the [Texas Administrative Code, Part 30, Chapter 681](#)
 - All things in accordance with your role as a Licensed Professional Counselor

Important Ethical Issues

- Informed Consent- including what they can expect throughout the process
- Confidentiality
- Dual Relationships

When and Why Would Counselors Use Assessments?

- Quantitative measures pre/post
- Measures validity of treatment
- Increases objectivity; challenges you to consider other options
- Quantify intangibles
- Relationship-building with parents
- Termination?
- To identify when further testing is needed
 - Presenting issue may be a consequence of a primary emotional or academic issue

Role of Diagnosis in Assessment

- DSM-V
- Diagnosing or “classifying”
 - Provide common ground of understanding among different professionals
 - Provide access to services
 - Often required for health insurance reimbursement
 - Criteria prompt a focus on validity and reliability of the system
 - Guides recommendations for intervention
- Broad nature of the DSM introduces validity questions
- Importance of ethical guidelines and integrity
- Be aware of subjectivity; experience and consultation are essential!
- How can assessment tools aid in diagnosis?