

# DSST® FUNDAMENTALS OF COUNSELING

## EXAM INFORMATION

This exam was developed to enable schools to award credit to students for knowledge equivalent to that learned by students taking the course. DSST Fundamentals of Counseling is a multiple-choice exam designed to evaluate whether candidates possess the knowledge and understanding that would be gained by taking a lower level college course in counseling which includes the following content: historical development; counselor roles and functions; the counseling relationship; theoretical approaches to counseling; social and cultural foundations; career development, human growth and development and assessment/appraisal techniques..

Content specifications for the exam were developed and approved by a panel of subject matter experts, all U.S. accredited college faculty members who are teaching or have taught a like course within the prior 3 years.

The exam contains 100 questions to be answered in 2 hours.

## EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

The following is an outline of the content areas covered in the examination. The approximate percentage of the examination devoted to each content area is also noted.

- I. **Historical Development – 5%**
  - a. Historical elements & Significant Influences
  - b. Significant people
- II. **Counselor Roles and Functions – 20%**
  - a. Counseling as a profession
  - b. Role expectations in different counseling settings
  - c. Professional Associations
  - d. Consultation
  - e. Group approaches
  - f. Family counseling
  - g. Individual counseling
  - h. Advocacy
- III. **The Counseling Relationship – 15%**
  - a. Communication
  - b. Counselor Characteristics and Skills
  - c. Ethical and legal issues
- IV. **Theoretical Approaches – 20%**
  - a. Psychodynamic
  - b. Humanistic and Experiential
  - c. Cognitive - Behavioral

- d. Behavioral
- e. Systems
- f. Postmodern approaches

## V. Social and Cultural Foundations – 15%

- a. Multicultural issues (e.g., religion race, ability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomics, spiritual, non-traditional approaches, etc.)
- b. Discrimination issues (e.g., gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, AIDS, managed care, etc.)
- c. Societal concerns (e.g., substance abuse, physical and sexual abuse, stress, violence)

## VI. Career Development – 7%

- a. Theories
- b. Decision making models
- c. Career Information Resources

## VII. Human Growth and Development – 8%

- a. Child development
- b. Adolescent development
- c. Adulthood

## VIII. Assessment and Appraisal Techniques – 10%

- a. Testing and Measurement
- b. Models of Assessment
- c. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. (DSM-IV)

## REFERENCES

Below is a list of reference publications that were either used as a reference to create the exam, or were used as textbooks in college courses of the same or similar title at the time the test was developed. You may reference either the current edition of these titles **or** textbooks currently used at a local college or university for the same class title. It is recommended that you reference **more than one textbook** on the topics outlined in this fact sheet.

You should **begin by checking textbook content against the content outline** provided **before** selecting textbooks that cover the test content from which to study.

Sources for study material are suggested but not limited to the following:

1. American Counseling Association (2014). *ACA Code of Ethics*. Counseling.org

2. Baruth, L. & Manning, M.L. *Multicultural Counseling and Psychotherapy: A Lifespan Approach*. Pearson, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed.
3. Corey, Gerald. *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*. Cengage Learning, 9<sup>th</sup> Ed.
4. Corey, Gerald (2007). *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling*. Cengage Learning, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.
5. Erford, Bradley T. *Assessment for Counselors*. Cengage Learning, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.
6. Gladding, Samuel T. *Counseling: A Comprehensive Profession*. Pearson, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.
7. Hood, A.B. & Johnson, R.W. *Assessment in Counseling: A Guide to the Use of Psychological Assessment Procedures*. Counseling Association, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.
8. Mash & Wolfe. *Abnormal Child Psychology*. Cengage Learning, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed.
9. McAuliffe, Garret J. (ed.). *Culturally Alert Counseling*. Sage Publications, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.
10. Parritz & Troy *Disorders of Childhood: Development and Psychopathology*. Cengage Learning, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.
11. Procheska, James. *Systems of Psychotherapy: A Transtheoretical Approach*. Brooks/Cole, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.
12. Seligman & Reichenberg. *Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy: Systems, Strategies, and Skills*. Pearson Education, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.
13. Sharf, Richard S. *Applying Career Development Theory to Counseling*. Cengage Learning, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.
14. Sue, Derald Wing & Sue, David. *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice*. Wiley, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.
15. Whiston, Susan C. *Principles & Applications of Assessment in Counseling*. Brooks/Cole Cengage, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.
16. Whitbourne & Halgin (2012). *Abnormal Psychology: Clinical Perspectives on Psychological Disorders*. McGraw-Hill, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.

17. Yalom, I.D. *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*. Basic Books, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS

All test questions are in a multiple-choice format, with one correct answer and three incorrect options. These are samples of the types of questions that may appear on the exam. Other sample questions can be found in the form of practice exams by visiting our website at [www.getcollegecredit.com/testprep](http://www.getcollegecredit.com/testprep).

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1. Historically, guidance and counseling services were first concerned with
  - a. Educational placement
  - b. Test appraisal
  - c. Personal concerns
  - d. Vocational placement
2. Counseling effectiveness is primarily based on the
  - a. Relationship between client and counselor
  - b. Similarity in ages between client and counselor
  - c. Counselor's self-understanding
  - d. Counselor's understanding of human development
3. A primary function of a counselor in the initial stages of assisting a client in career planning is to encourage
  - a. Continuing education
  - b. Selecting a specific occupation
  - c. Seeking the highest possible professional level
  - d. Exploring a wide range of occupations
4. Research shows that a counselor can be most effective when providing services for a client who is a member of a minority group if the counselor
  - a. is both knowledgeable and responsive to cultural differences
  - b. Is a member of the client's minority group
  - c. Has lived with the client's minority group for a period of time
  - d. Has had cross-cultural training
5. A basic assumption of the client-centered counseling theory is that
  - a. The counselor should assume a directive role
  - b. The counselor should assume a passive role
  - c. Every client possesses potential for growth
  - d. Every client behavior has a distinct psychological purpose
6. The concept of reinforcement is most often associated with
  - a. Client-centered counseling
  - b. Behavioral counseling
  - c. Psychoanalytical counseling

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- d. Gestalt counseling
- 7. Most adolescents seek social acceptance and recognition through contact with
  - a. Other adolescents
  - b. Teachers
  - c. Parents
  - d. Young adults
- 8. Test reliability is best defined as
  - a. The consistency of measurements obtained
  - b. The estimate of the size of the test score error
  - c. The test measuring what it is designed to measure
  - d. A comparative score to which an individual's test performance can be related
- 9. The ethical standards code of the American Counseling Association (ACA) stresses that a counselor's primary responsibility is to
  - a. The institution or agency of employment
  - b. The professional organization
  - c. The client
  - d. Society
- 10. "Therapy groups" is the term usually given to groups in which the emphasis is on the
  - a. Similarity of the members' problems
  - b. Differences among the members' problems
  - c. Common expectations of the members
  - d. Personal change and development of the members

The American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service (ACE CREDIT) has evaluated the DSST test development process and content of this exam. It has made the following recommendations:

<b>Area or Course Equivalent</b>	Fundamentals of Counseling
<b>Level</b>	Lower-level baccalaureate
<b>Amount of Credit</b>	Three (3) semester hours
<b>Minimum Score</b>	400
<b>Source</b>	American Council on Education – College Credit Recommendation Service

**Answers to sample questions:** 1-D; 2-A; 3-D; 4-A; 5-C; 6-B; 7-A; 8-A; 9-C; 10-D.

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**CREDIT RECOMMENDATIONS**