



Counselor Code of Ethics: Professional Responsibilities and Client Rights

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A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this study is to explain the rights of counselees and the responsibilities of counselors that must be fulfilled in accordance with the existing counselor code of ethics. The counselor code of ethics is a guide to professional behavior, a moral foundation, a collection of principles or values regarding morals in counseling practice. The results of this discussion explain that this code of ethics establishes ethical obligations for ABKIN members and provides guidelines for ethical practice of professional counselors or guidance and counseling teachers. Counseling ethics must involve awareness and desire to maintain the importance of the responsibility to protect client trust. The rights of counselees must be respected and protected by counselors, including the right to privacy, information, participation, and the right to receive quality services. Counselor responsibilities include the obligation to maintain confidentiality, avoid conflicts of interest, pay attention to client interests, and update professional knowledge and skills regularly. The counselor code of ethics aims to be a guide to behavior, helping to develop counseling services.

The purpose of this study is to explain the counselor's rights and the counselor's responsibilities that must be fulfilled in accordance with the existing counselor code of ethics. The counselor's code of ethics is a guide to professional behavior, a moral foundation, a collection of principles or values relating to morals in counseling practice. The results of this discussion explain that this code of ethics establishes ethical obligations for ABKIN members and provides guidance on the ethical practice of professional guidance and counseling counselors or teachers. Counseling ethics must involve an awareness and a desire to maintain the importance of the responsibility to protect the client's trust. The counselor's rights must be respected and protected by the counselor, including the right to privacy, information, participation, and the right to quality services. The counselor's responsibilities include the obligation to maintain confidentiality, avoid conflicts of interest, look out for the client's interests, and update professional knowledge and skills on a regular basis. Counselors' code of ethics aims to be a guide to behavior, assisting in developing counseling services.



Introduction

1. Introduction

The right is absolutely owned or obtained by everyone while responsibility is the attitude that someone must do something that is his obligation, without orders from others. The task of the counselor in the counseling process is to encourage the development of the client's potential to be able to work effectively and efficiently and become an independent person, so that the client achieves an effective life for the family, society and nation as well as for themselves. This is in line with the opinion of Mulyadi (2016: 58), counseling is a one-on-one meeting between the counselor (an expert) and the client (the person receiving assistance) through professional interviews in order to help the client overcome the problems he faces.

According to Sofyan (2014: 18), counseling is an effort to provide assistance provided by a trained and experienced counselor to individuals who need it, so that the individual also develops their potential optimally, is able to overcome their problems, and is able to adapt to an ever-changing environment. A good counselor is able to help in the process of forming and influencing physical and psychological maturity as well as the subject's way of thinking. The counseling profession is not just a service, but a good quality of service. Services in counseling must also use theory, scientific methods, be clear and systematic, in addition to quality, the thing that must be considered is the sincerity of the service provider or counselor, this sincerity is motivated by altruistic motives (the desire to sacrifice selflessly) during honest service.

A counselor should have a sense of responsibility towards his/her client. A good counselor is able to provide the rights that a client must obtain both in the process and the results that will be obtained later. The success process in this counseling is not only influenced by a counselor but also the client, so if both parties can work together in fulfilling their respective obligations and rights, the results that will be obtained in counseling will also be maximized. As a counselor, he/she should also be able to face various problems of the client and have a responsible attitude in carrying out the counseling process is also a task that the counselor must know. Another hope is that at least the counselor is able to be responsible for himself/herself first, including in his/her work as a counselor.

The counseling profession, deeply rooted in the principles of ethics and client welfare, emphasizes the importance of maintaining high standards of professionalism, confidentiality, and integrity. The role of a counselor goes beyond mere guidance; it involves upholding a sacred trust that ensures the client's well-being and autonomy in the therapeutic process. Central to this responsibility is the counselor's adherence to an established code of ethics, which serves as a guide for professional conduct and outlines the rights of clients, including the right to informed consent, confidentiality, and a respectful, non-judgmental environment. This ethical framework is not only essential in protecting clients but also in reinforcing the counselor's professional identity and accountability within the broader field of mental health.

In recent years, the counseling field has seen significant evolution, influenced by factors such as advancements in technology, increased cultural diversity among clients, and shifting societal expectations of mental health professionals. These changes have introduced new ethical challenges and have necessitated a deeper exploration of both the counselor's professional responsibilities and the rights of clients. With the rise of teletherapy and digital platforms for mental health services, issues related to client privacy, data security, and the counselor's accountability in a virtual setting have emerged. These developments require counselors to not only adhere to traditional ethical standards but also adapt to new guidelines that address the complexities of online counseling environments.

A critical component of the counselor's code of ethics is the principle of client autonomy. This principle dictates that clients should have a clear understanding of the counseling process, including the methods used, potential risks, and expected outcomes. Informed consent is therefore a cornerstone of ethical counseling, empowering clients with the knowledge they need to make decisions about their treatment. However, implementing informed consent is not without its challenges. Cultural differences, language barriers, and varying levels of mental health literacy can impact a client's ability to fully understand and consent to treatment, underscoring the need for counselors to develop cultural competency and communicate effectively with diverse populations.

The ethical code also emphasizes confidentiality as a fundamental right of the client. Maintaining client confidentiality fosters trust, which is essential for an effective therapeutic relationship. However, this duty is not absolute, as there are instances where confidentiality may be legally or ethically breached, such as cases involving potential harm to the client or others. Counselors must navigate these situations with care, balancing the need to protect client privacy with the responsibility to ensure safety and comply with legal mandates. The complexity of confidentiality issues has increased with digital records and online communication, where data security poses additional risks to maintaining client privacy.



Moreover, the counselor's code of ethics addresses the importance of professional boundaries to prevent conflicts of interest and maintain a therapeutic focus. Violations of professional boundaries, even if unintentional, can harm the client and jeopardize the integrity of the counseling relationship. The rapid expansion of social media and the digital footprint of both clients and counselors has made it increasingly challenging to uphold these boundaries, as casual interactions on social platforms can blur the line between personal and professional relationships. Ethical training now includes guidance on managing these digital boundaries, but the field continues to grapple with the unique dilemmas posed by the digital age.

Given the complex ethical landscape counselors must navigate, this study seeks to explore the key components of the counselor code of ethics, focusing on the intersection of professional responsibilities and client rights. By examining contemporary challenges and best practices, this research aims to provide insights that will aid counselors in upholding ethical standards while adapting to modern demands. Furthermore, this study will highlight the importance of ethical awareness and continuous education in enabling counselors to make informed decisions that prioritize client welfare and uphold the core values of the counseling profession. In a field that is continuously evolving, a thorough understanding of ethical responsibilities and client rights is paramount for fostering trust, integrity, and accountability in counselor-client relationships.

2. Methodology

This research method took place in one of the SMANs in Cirebon City, namely SMAN 2 Cirebon. The research time on the rights of counselees and counselors was carried out in one meeting. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from interviews and observations. The main data source is an interview with the BK teacher of SMA 2 Cirebon City. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are obtained through documentation and literature studies. The data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation, observation persistence, and discussion with friends are used. Data analysis is carried out through data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Research instruments include observation and interview guidelines, recording devices, cameras, and stationery. This study aims to obtain complete data on phenomena that exist in society

3. Result and Discussion

Understanding the Counselor Code of Ethics

All counselors must comply with the Counselor Code of Ethics, because all client rights that must be fulfilled by the counselor and the responsibilities of a counselor are contained in the Counselor Code of Ethics. According to (Yusuf, 2010) the Counselor Code of Ethics, it is a collection of standards, regulations, guidelines, and values that regulate the direction of actions or actions in an organization for its workers or members, and interactions between workers or members and the community. The Counselor Code of Ethics is a moral foundation and guideline for professional behavior that is upheld, practiced and secured by every member of the Indonesian Guidance and Counseling profession. The Indonesian Counselor Code of Ethics must be obeyed and ratified by the management and members of the organization at the national, provincial, and district/city levels. This is in line with (Aniswita, Neviyarni, Mudjiran, & Nirwana, 2021) the Counselor Code of Ethics, which is a set of rules, norms, and values that must be respected and obeyed by all members of the counselor profession in carrying out their professional duties or in their lives in society. The code of ethics of counselors is a moral foundation and guideline for professional behavior that must be upheld and implemented by every member of the guidance and counseling profession in Indonesia. Understanding the Code of Ethics of Counselors.

A counselor code of ethics is a set of moral guidelines or rules that govern the behavior and professional practice of counselors. This code of ethics outlines the values, principles, and standards expected of a counselor in carrying out his or her duties. The purpose of a counselor code of ethics is to protect the interests of clients, maintain professionalism, and ensure that counselors act ethically.

The counselor code of ethics serves as a guideline for counselors in carrying out effective and responsible counseling practices. This code of ethics regulates various aspects of counseling practice, including relationships with clients, confidentiality, professional integrity, competence, and social responsibility. In many countries, professional organizations such as the Counselor Association or Counseling Council have codes of ethics that serve as references for counselors in their practice. One of the main principles of the counselor code of ethics is to prioritize the welfare of the client. Counselors are expected to maintain the best interests of clients and work to improve their quality of life. Counselors must uphold the dignity, rights, and autonomy of clients, and respect diversity and individual differences. Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counselor code of ethics. Counselors are expected to maintain the



confidentiality of all information obtained from clients, unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of the client or others. This builds trust and maintains the privacy of clients so that they feel safe sharing their personal concerns with the counselor. Professional integrity is also an important value in the counselor code of ethics. Counselors are expected to maintain high standards in their practice, including being honest, fair, and open. They must avoid conflicts of interest, abuse of power, and behavior that is detrimental to clients. Counselors are also expected to engage in ongoing self-development and reflection to remain competent and up-to-date in their counseling practice.

The code of ethics for counselors also emphasizes the importance of professional competence. Counselors are expected to have adequate knowledge, skills, and experience in the field of counseling. They must continually improve their expertise through training and professional development. Counselors must also be aware of their own limitations and refer clients to other specialists when necessary.

In addition, the counselor code of ethics also highlights social responsibility. Counselors are expected to be advocates for their clients and advocate for positive social change. They must promote justice, respect human rights, and be particThe Indonesian counseling code of ethics was compiled by the Indonesian Counseling Guidance Association (ABKIN) and is stated in Decree no: 009/SK/PBABKIN/VIII/2018 . The counselor code of ethics contains matters such as counselor qualifications and competencies, counselor rights and obligations, counselor relationships with clients, confidentiality, and others. The purpose of compiling the Indonesian counseling code of ethics is to provide guidance on attitudes or behaviors that are characterful and professional for members in providing services, assist in providing professional services, support the vision and mission of professional organizations, become a basis for solving problems that come from professional members, protect counselors from clients, and increase accountability and integrity of professional counselor organizations . The following are several points from the Indonesian Guidance and Counseling Professional Code of Ethics issued by PBABKIN number 010 of 2006:

1. Counselor qualifications in values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and insights.
 - a. Counselors must continuously develop and master themselves. Counselors must understand their own shortcomings and prejudices, which can affect relationships with others and result in low quality professional services and harm clients.
 - b. As a counselor, it is important to demonstrate certain qualities such as modesty, humility, patience, reliability, honesty, organization, and respect. While the search results do not provide information about the counselor specifically, they do provide information about other professional responsibilities and skills that may be relevant to this question.
 - c. As a counselor, it is important to have a sense of responsibility for the advice and reprimands given, especially from colleagues, regarding the implementation of the professional code of ethics as outlined in the Code of Ethics.
 - d. A counselor should prioritize the highest possible quality of work and not prioritize personal interests, including material, financial, and popularity gains. A counselor should prioritize the interests of clients and help them achieve their goals in the counseling process. This can be achieved by paying attention to the ethics and standards of the counseling profession that apply in each country.
 - e. Counselors must have technical skills. Technical skills are the specific abilities and knowledge needed to perform a particular job or task in a technical field, such as engineering, programming, or mechanics. Technical skills are usually developed through formal education, training, and practical experience in a particular field.

The personality or behavior of the counselor is the most important element in providing guidance and counseling services. According to Holik (2016), knowledge and skills in counseling alone are not enough to provide assistance without being supported by the counselor's personality. In guidance and counseling services, the knowledge, skills, experience, and personality qualities of the counselor greatly influence the effectiveness of the service. The attitudes or behaviors that must be possessed by the counselor include creating a conducive relationship and atmosphere in providing services, a sense of objectivity towards the counselee, exploring the causes of psychological counselee problems, determining a frame of reference or cognitive device that can be understood by the counselee to solve problems, A professional counselor is a counselor who has a good, healthy, and stable personality, which is needed in providing assistance or services. It is impossible for a counselor to help a counselee solve his/her problems if the counselor himself/herself has a fragile personality. Therefore, it is important for counselors to develop a good and healthy personality in order to provide effective guidance and counseling services . The results of the explanation above show that a code of ethics is very necessary. Because all the obligations and responsibilities of the counselor that must be given to the client and the rights that must be obtained by the client are stipulated in the code of ethics.

Understanding and Rights of Counselees

Any individual who is given professional assistance by a Counselor at his own request or that of another person can be called a client or counselee.

Client rights at SMAN 2 CIREBON:

1. Get classical guidance



2. Class guidance
3. Group guidance
4. Individual counseling
5. Group counseling
6. Consultation
7. Home visit
8. Implementation and follow-up of assessments (Including home visits)

The rights of the counselee are:

1. Clients have the right to consider and appreciate Nursing care.
2. Clients have the right to obtain the latest and complete information from their doctor regarding their diagnosis, treatment and prognosis.
3. Clients have the right to receive important information from their doctor to provide informed consent regarding the commencement of a treatment procedure and the important risks that they may experience except in an emergency system.
4. The client has the right to refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law and to be informed of the consequences of his actions.

Understanding Counselor Responsibilities and Responsibilities

According to Schiller & Bryan (2002), responsibility is an attitude or action in a certain situation that shows how to react. Meanwhile, according to Wiyoto, (2001), responsibility is the ability to make appropriate decisions so that relationships between people can be more positive, successful, and prosperous. A counselor must be responsible for his role and function.

Based on analysis and interviews with BK teachers at SMAN 2 Cirebon, there is some information related to the responsibilities of a counselor in the school environment:

1. Provide excellent service
2. Provide counseling services at least once to each student.
3. Provide direct and indirect counseling services
4. Exploring students' potential
5. Guide students to achieve independence according to developmental aspects.
6. Helping students with problems
7. Meet the needs of students
8. Help students to make decisions
9. Mastering counseling theories and techniques

From several interview results related to the BK teacher above, this is in line with the role of counselors in providing services to individuals so that clients can find out information that they did not previously know. Meanwhile, in terms of work professionalism, counselors are responsible for their behavior as a form of awareness of their obligations. Counselors must master counseling theory and procedures so that clients get good service. In addition, counselors are also responsible for encouraging and exploring the potential of clients so that they can become active and independent individuals.

Counselor responsibility is closely related to obligations or work. Responsibility is a characteristic of a counselor who has principles and commitments in helping clients' problems. According to Remley in Gladding (2012) Counselors must understand their values, code of ethics and responsibilities. Counselors must be aware of the development of value rules in the environment and have the ability or work competence in their service field.

There are several concepts of counselor responsibility including the following components: (1) subject of responsibility (who is responsible), (2) object of responsibility (for what), (3) recipient of responsibility (for/to whom), (4) example of jury or sanction, (5) prescriptive/normative responsibility criteria, and (6) area of responsibility and action.

In the counseling process, the counselor is responsible for 1) maintaining the confidentiality of the client 2) exploring the potential of the client, 3) observing what the client needs, 4) creating a calm atmosphere when counseling takes place, 5) identifying the client's problems, and, 5) directing the client to be able to make their own decisions. In line with that, as a counselor we have an obligation that aims for the good of the client. We must carry out and maintain this obligation well as a manifestation of awareness of the responsibility that is borne. If the counselor gets a difficult problem and requires more time, the counselor must try to provide the best action to help the client in solving his/her problem.

4. Conclusion

The Counselor Code of Ethics is a set of moral and professional guidelines that govern the behavior and practice of counselors in carrying out their duties. The main purpose of this code of ethics is to protect and promote the interests of clients and ensure good quality of service in counseling practice.

Counselee Rights are the rights held by individuals undergoing counseling. These rights include the right to be respected, to receive honest and accurate information, to confidentiality and privacy, to be treated fairly, to participate in the decision-making process, and to have professional and competent services.

Counselor Responsibilities include moral and professional responsibilities that must be carried out by the counselor. Moral responsibilities relate to ethical and moral obligations to protect the interests of the client, maintain confidentiality, respect the dignity and rights of the client, and maintain justice in counseling practice. Professional responsibilities include professional competence, continuous self-development, conducting supervision, and following professional standards in counseling practice.

Counselors have a responsibility to provide quality counseling services to clients. They must have adequate competence, maintain the confidentiality and privacy of clients, and provide protection and security to clients. Counselors also have a responsibility to ensure that their counseling practice is based on accurate knowledge, uses appropriate approaches, and follows applicable ethical and professional standards.

In counseling practice, it is important for counselors to uphold the principles of the code of ethics, respect the rights of clients, and carry out their responsibilities with integrity and professionalism. Thus, the relationship between counselor and client can be established well, thus helping clients achieve their goals in the counseling process.

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