

State of Ohio Counselor, Social Worker & Marriage and Family Therapist Board

Chapter 4757-5 Rules for Standards of ethical and professional conduct

**4757-5-06 Standards of ethical practice and professional conduct: assessment and testing instruments.**

(A) General use of assessment and testing instruments:

- (1) Appraisal techniques: the primary purpose of educational and psychological assessment is to provide measures that are objective and interpretable in either comparative or absolute terms. Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall interpret the statements in this rule as applying to the whole range of appraisal techniques, including test and non-test data.
- (2) Client welfare: counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall promote the welfare and best interests of the client in the development, publication, and utilization of educational and psychological assessment results and interpretations and take reasonable steps to prevent others from misusing the information these techniques provide. They shall respect the client's rights to know the results, of the interpretations made, and the bases for their conclusions and recommendations.

(B) Competence to use and interpret assessment and testing instruments:

- (1) Limits of competence: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall recognize the limits of their competence and perform only those testing and assessment services for which they have training. They shall be familiar with reliability, validity, related standardization, error of measurement, and proper application of any technique utilized. Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists using computer-based test interpretations shall be trained in the construct being measured and the specific instrument being used prior to using this type of computer application. Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall take reasonable measures to ensure the proper use of psychological assessment techniques by persons under their supervision.
- (2) Appropriate use: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists are responsible for the appropriate selection, application, scoring, interpretation, and use of assessment instruments, whether they score and interpret such tests themselves or use computerized or other services.
- (3) Decisions based on results: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists responsible for decisions involving individuals or policies that are based on assessment results shall have a thorough understanding of educational and psychological measurement, including validation criteria, test research, and guidelines for test development and use.
- (4) Accurate information: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall provide accurate information and shall not make false claims when making statements about assessment instruments or techniques. Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall seek to identify and correct client misconceptions about assessment instruments or techniques and about the meaning of scores, charts, or graphs given to them as assessment

- product. Special efforts shall be made to avoid unwarranted connotations of such terms as "IQ" and grade equivalent scores.
- (C) Informed consent in the use of assessment and testing instruments:
- (1) Explanation to clients: Prior to assessment, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall explain the nature and purposes of assessment and the specific use of results in language the client (or other legally authorized person on behalf of the client) can understand, unless an explicit exception to this right has been agreed upon in advance. Regardless of whether scoring and interpretation are completed by counselors, social workers, marriage and family therapists, by assistants, or by computer or other outside services, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall take reasonable steps to ensure that appropriate explanations are given to the client.
  - (2) Recipients of results: The examinee's welfare, explicit understanding, and prior agreement shall determine the recipients of test results. Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall include accurate and appropriate interpretations with any release of individual or group test results.
- (D) Release of information to competent professionals of assessment and testing instrument results:
- (1) Misuse of results: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall not misuse assessment results, including test results, and interpretations, and take reasonable steps to prevent the misuse of such by others.
  - (2) Release of raw data: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall ordinarily release data (e.g. protocols, counseling or interview notes, or questionnaires) in which the client is identified only with the consent of the client or the client's legal representative. Such data shall usually be released only to persons recognized by counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists as competent to interpret the data.
- (E) Proper diagnosis of mental disorders with the use of assessment and testing instruments:
- (1) Proper diagnosis: Counselors and social workers shall take special care to provide accurate diagnosis of mental disorders. Assessment techniques (including personal interview) used to determine client care (e.g., locus of treatment, type of treatment or recommended follow-up) shall be carefully selected and appropriately used.
  - (2) Cultural sensitivity: Counselors and social workers shall recognize that culture affects the manner in which client's problems are defined. Clients' socioeconomic and cultural experience shall be considered when diagnosing mental disorders.
- (F) Test selection in the use and interpretation of assessment and testing instruments:
- (1) Appropriateness of instruments: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall carefully consider the validity, reliability, psychometric limitations and appropriateness of instruments when selecting tests for use in a given situation or with a particular client.
  - (2) Culturally diverse populations: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists recognize that the psychometric characteristics of a test (e.g., reliability, validity) are a function of the cultural composition of the population in which they were evaluated, validated, or normed. Licensees shall exercise due

diligence in selecting tests to be used within a culturally diverse population in order to minimize the risk of inappropriate interpretation of test scores.

(G) Conditions of test administration when using assessment and testing instruments:

- (1) Administration conditions: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall administer tests under the same conditions that were established in their standardization. When tests are not administered under standard conditions or when unusual behavior or irregularities occur during the testing session, those conditions shall be noted in interpretation, and the results may be designated as invalid or of questionable validity.
- (2) Computer administration: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall be responsible for ensuring that assessment administration programs function properly to provide clients with accurate results when a computer or other electronic methods are used for test administration.
- (3) Unsupervised test-taking: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall not permit unsupervised or inadequately supervised use of tests or assessments unless the tests or assessments are designed, intended, and validated for self administration and/or scoring.
- (4) Disclosure of favorable conditions: prior to test administration, conditions that produce most favorable test results shall be made known to the examinee.

(H) Diversity when using assessment and testing instruments: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall be cautious in using assessment techniques, making evaluations, and interpreting the performance of populations not represented in the norm group on which an instrument was standardized. They shall recognize the effects of age, color, culture, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status on test administration and interpretation and place test interpretation results in proper perspective with other relevant factors.

(I) Test scoring and interpretation when using assessment and testing instruments:

- (1) Reporting reservations: In reporting assessment results, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists, shall indicate any reservations that exist regarding validity or reliability because of the circumstances of the assessment or the inappropriateness of the norms for the person tested.
- (2) Research instruments: counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall exercise caution when interpreting the results of research instruments possessing insufficient technical data to support respondent results. The specific purposes for the use of such instruments shall be stated explicitly to the examinee.
- (3) Testing services: counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists who provide test scoring and test interpretation services to support the assessment process shall confirm the validity of such interpretations. They shall accurately describe the purpose, norms, validity, reliability, and applications of the procedures and any special qualifications applicable to their use. The public offering of an automated test interpretations service is considered a professional-to-professional consultation. The formal responsibility of the consultant is to the consultee, but the ultimate and overriding responsibility is to the client.

(J) Test security when using assessment and testing instruments: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall maintain the integrity and security of

tests and other assessment techniques consistent with legal and contractual obligations. Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall not appropriate, reproduce, or modify published tests or parts thereof without acknowledgment and permission from the publisher.

(K) Obsolete tests and outdated test results when using assessment and testing instruments: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall not use data or test results that are obsolete or outdated for the current purpose. Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall make every effort to prevent the misuse of obsolete measures and test data by others.

(L) Test construction for assessment and testing instruments: Counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists shall use established scientific procedures, relevant standards, and current professional knowledge for test design in the development, publication, and utilization of educational and psychological assessment techniques.

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