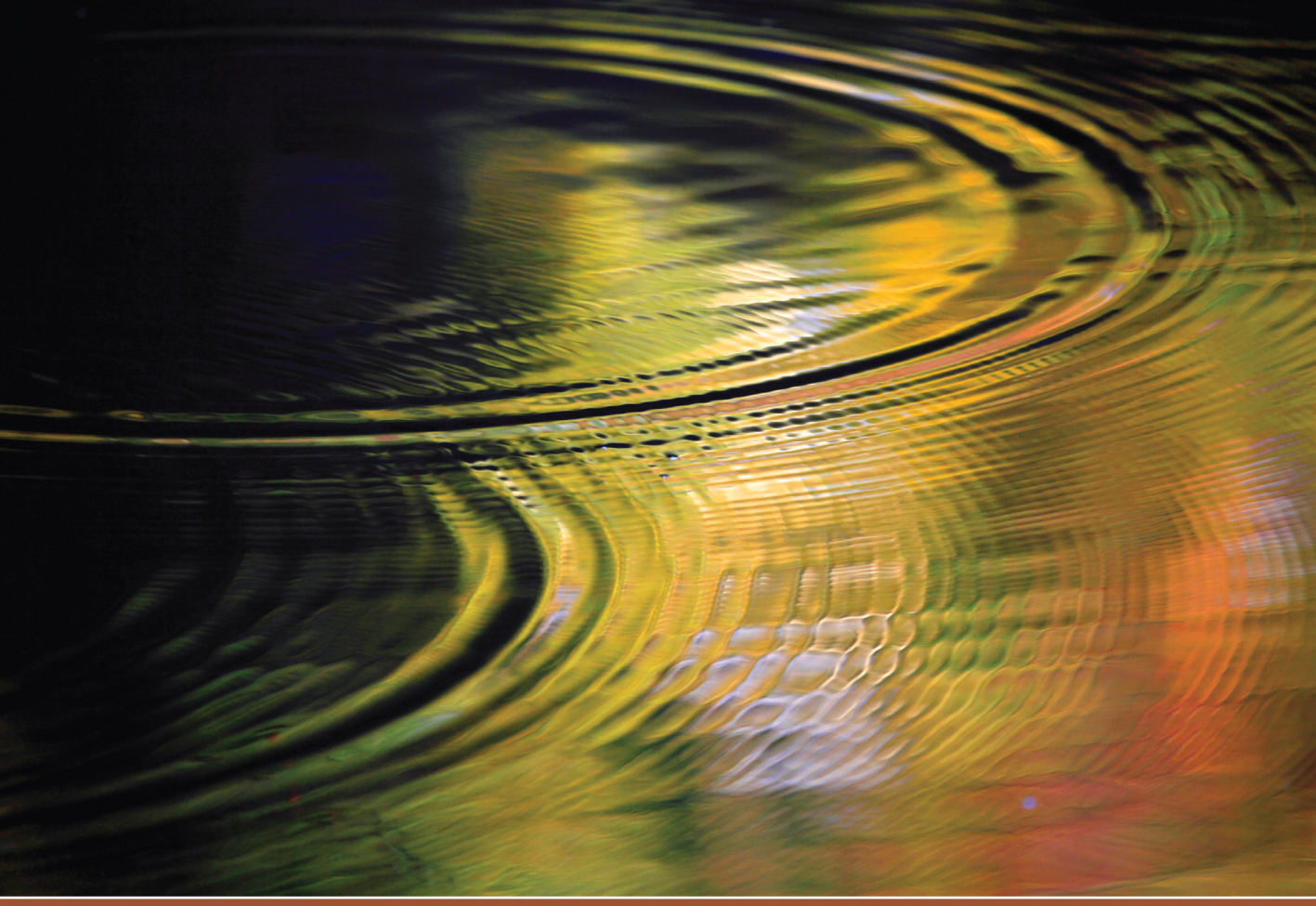

Becoming a Skilled Counselor

Richard D. Parsons
Naijian Zhang

COUNSELING and PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Counseling and Professional Identity titles matched to CACREP 2009 Standards
Titles in *Counseling and Professional Identity* Series

CACREP Standards	*Introduction to Professional Counseling*	*Counseling Assessment and Evaluation*	*Group Work*	*Becoming a Skilled Counselor*	*Theories of Counseling and Techniques*	*Counseling Individuals Through the Life Span*	*Becoming a Multiculturally Competent Counselor*	*Research Methods for Counseling*	*Career Development and Counseling*	*Essentials of Becoming a Skilled Consultant*	*Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues for Counselors in the 21st Century*
1. PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION AND ETHCIAL PRACTICE											
a.	X										
b.	X		X	X					X	X	X
c.											
d.	X			X							X
e.	X			X							X
f.	X										X
g.	X										X
h.	X										X
i.	X										X
j.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY											
a.						X					
b.				X		X					
c.	X			X	X	X	X				X
d.			X			X				X	
e.			X		X	X	X				X
f.	X						X				X
g.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT											
a.						X					
b.					X	X					
c .						X					
d.						X	X				
e.						X	X		X		
f.			X			X					
h.						X					X
4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT											
a.									X		
b.									X		
c .									X	X	
d.									X		
e.									X		
f.		X							X		
g.									X		
5. HELPING RELATIONSHIPS											
a.	X			X							
b.	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
c .	X		X	X	X				X	X	
d.			X	X	X						X
e.			X		X		X				
f.	X									X	
g.	X				X					X	
h.	X									X	X
6. GROUP WORK											
a.			X								
b.			X								
c .			X								
d.			X								X
e.			X								X
7. ASSESSMENT											
a.		X									
b.		X	X	X							
c .		X						X			
d.		X						X			
e.		X						X			
f.		X				X					
g.		X									
8. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION											
a.								X			
b.								X			
c .								X			
d.								X			X
e.								X			

COUNSELING AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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Becoming a Skilled Counselor

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Editors' Preface

Introduction to the Series
Counseling and Professional Identity

B*ecoming a Skilled Counselor* is a text that introduces the basic information and fundamental skills required of all who are beginning their journey toward their development as professional helpers. As is obvious, one text—or one learning experience—will not be sufficient for the successful formation of your professional identity and practice. The formation of both this professional identity and practice will be a lifelong process—a process that we hope to facilitate through the presentation of this text and the creation of our series: *Counseling and Professional Identity.*

Counseling and Professional Identity is a fresh, new, and pedagogically sound series of texts targeting counselors-in-training. This series is *not* simply a compilation of isolated books matching that which is already in the market. Rather each book, with its targeted knowledge and skills, is part of a larger whole. The focus and content of each text serves as a single lens through which counselors can view their clients, engage in their practice, and articulate their own professional identity.

Counseling and Professional Identity is unique not just in the fact that it "packages" a series of traditional texts, but that it provides an integrated curriculum targeting the formation of the readers' professional identity and efficient, ethical practice. Each book, within the series, is structured to facilitate the ongoing professional formation of the reader. The materials found within each text are organized to move readers to higher levels of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor functioning, resulting in assimilation of the materials presented into both their professional identity and approach to professional practice. While each text targets a specific set of core competencies (cognates and skills)—competencies identified by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) as essential to the practice of counseling (see inside front cover)—each text in the series will also emphasize each of the following:

1. Assimilation of concepts and constructs provided across the text found within the series, thus fostering the reader's ongoing development as a competent professional
2. Blending of contemporary theory with current research and empirical support
3. Development of procedural knowledge with each text employing case illustrations and guided practice exercises to facilitate the readers ability to translate the theory and research discussed into professional decision making and application
4. Need for and means of demonstrating accountability
5. Fostering of the reader's professional identity and with it the assimilation of the ethics and standards of practice guiding the counseling profession

We are proud to have served as coeditors of this series, feeling sure that each will serve as a significant resource to readers and their development as professional counselors.

Richard D. Parsons, PhD

Naijian Zhang, PhD

Authors' Preface

Becoming a Skilled Counselor

Having a desire to assist or to help another may be ingrained in one's DNA—however the ability to be of assistance, to truly be a helper, requires more than a desire and a caring heart. Competent helpers possess and exhibit certain personal qualities or dispositions and specific knowledge and skills. Parents, for example, when confronted with their child's 102-degree fever will certainly be moved to "help." Regardless of the strength of their desire to help, without the knowledge and skill necessary to address the issue at hand, their desire to help will, at best, be inadequate and at worse detrimental.

Helping when performed in the absence of the required knowledge and skills is not only inadequate but, when provided by one who presents as a "professional" may prove to be both unethical and illegal. *Becoming a Skilled Counselor* serves as *one* step toward the development of the knowledge and skills essential to the role of helper and the process of helping. Specifically, this text provides an understanding of the essentials of the counseling relationship, the dynamic of the helping process, and the nature of the theories and research guiding selection and employment of interventions.

Becoming a Skilled Counselor is a book designed to address specific competencies identified by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) as essential to developing an understanding of the processes of counseling and the development of a counselor's professional identity (see Table AP.1).

Table AP.1 CACREP 2009 Standards Addressed

	1. PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE	5. HELPING RELATIONSHIPS	7. ASSESSMENT	8. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM
Chapter 1		5a 5b 5g		
Chapter 2				
Chapter 3		5b 5c		
Chapter 4		5c		
Chapter 5		5c		
Chapter 6		5c 5d		8e
Chapter 7		5g	7b	
Chapter 8	1a 1d 1e	5g		8e
Chapter 9	1a 1b 1f 1g 1h 1i	5a 5c 5d 5g		
Chapter 10		5b 5c 5d		
Chapter 11		5b 5c 5d		
Chapter 12		5b 5c 5d		

Specifically the goals of this text are to complete the following:

1. Provide the reader with a view of the goals of counseling to include wellness and prevention.
2. Assist the reader's identification of personal motives for becoming a counselor, one's own personal state of wellness, and life adjustments which may be needed when becoming a counselor.
3. Highlight counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes.
4. Review essential interviewing and counseling skills.
5. Describe counseling theories and models that serve as models for conceptualizing client issues and treatment planning.
6. Review research supporting professional practice and treatment selection.
7. Highlight the need for the employment of measures of accountability.

This text includes extensive discussion and attention given to the specific nature of the helping relationship and the dynamics of the process of helping. As suggested previously, you will be introduced to the unique attitudes and skills required of the effective helper and become familiar with the contemporary theory and research which is used to guide case conceptualization and treatment planning. However, beyond the didactics of the book, the reality highlighted throughout this text, and each text within the series, is that helping another human being at a time when he or she needs our support involves much more than theory or skill application. Serving in the role of counselor is an experience of deep personal responsibility and satisfaction. It is in the blending of your heartfelt desire to help, with your increasing knowledge and skill about the counseling profession and practice, that you will become a true and competent counselor.

MORE THAN THE ACQUISITION OF INFORMATION

Unlike those enrolled in training programs in other "nonhelping" disciplines, those engaging in training as professional helpers need to approach their readings and their training with the intent of moving beyond simple information acquisition to the assimilation of that information into their identity as a professional; this assimilation also applies to the values these trainees employ to guide the applications of this knowledge and skill. To this end, this book, as with the other books within the series, has been structured in a way to promote the reader's assimilation and personalization of the material presented and the development of higher levels of learning, including the ability to value what is presented.

The chapters are designed to include case illustrations, practical exercises, and thoughtful suggestions for future direction. This approach is offered in hopes that you will gain:

1. *Cognitive clarity.* It is important to not only read the material presented, but reflect on the material and discuss the concepts described with your teachers, classmates, or colleagues. The goal should be to move from simply understanding to assimilating the theories, the constructs, and the concepts presented into your developing professional identity and an approach to helping.
2. *Behavioral clarity.* You are invited to practice the skills described by completing the exercises, modeling, and role playing, and also requesting corrective feedback from your teachers, classmates, or colleagues. While this practice probably won't make it perfect, it will certainly lead to improvement.
3. *Affective clarity.* Finally, as you will soon discover, helping is not a sterile, formulaic process. It is an awesome, demanding, and potentially rewarding experience that will touch you deeply. It is important as you continue to develop your professional identity and professional practice to clarify your feelings associated with being a helper, identifying those feelings which are facilitative and those which may be inhibitory to your helping endeavors.

ONE CAVEAT

The very nature of a book—with its static, two-dimensional presentation of life—severely limits the accurate and complete depiction of the helping process—a process that is *personal* and *dynamic.*

The information found within this text is presented in nice, linear, and logical steps. This is done because it supports the goals of explanation and knowledge acquisition. However, life is neither linear nor always logical—a point highlighted by the cases presented in Part III.

It is important to remember that the steps and skills described are presented in an artificially static state and that in reality they are employed in a dynamic, intertwined, and spiraling state of reflective practice. As such, we caution you that as you read through the upcoming chapters *not* to minimize the complexity of the human condition, nor the awesomeness of both the experience and responsibility of being a counselor.

The profession in which you are engaging has both a noble history and a valued future, and its health relies on the ethical, competent participation of members—like you.

Acknowledgments

Many researchers and theorists provide the foundation for the material to be discussed, however the real substance and "life" of the book has been extracted from the many courageous clients and supportive colleagues with whom we have been privileged to work. The illustrations presented throughout the book reflect a composite of the various individuals with whom we have worked. All the names and significant identifying information about the actual cases have been modified in order to insure confidentiality.

While our names appear as authors on this work, we would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge all those who have helped us in the process. A special thank you goes to each of the following who so graciously reviewed our project and provided valuable suggestions which have made this final manuscript something of which we, and we hope they, are proud. These include: Phu D. Hoang, Texas A&M International University; Geoffrey G. Yager, University of Cincinnati; Sandra Loew, University of North Alabama; James R. Verhoye, Metropolitan State University; Allan A. Morotti, University of Alaska Fairbanks; George I. Mamboleo, Alabama A&M University; Patricia K. McIntyre, Rosemont College; Susan Temperato, Canisius College; Lorraine J. Guth, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; DeDe Wohlfarth, Spalding University; Cheryl Ramey, Eastern Kentucky University; Margaret Carlock-Russo, Hofstra University; Linda Barley, York College, CUNY; Peggy Brooks, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts; Rolanda Bell, University of Phoenix; and Dorothy Durband, Texas Tech University.

While the aforementioned provided guidance in regard to the content found within this text, it was the special gift and talent of Gretchen Treadwell who, as copy editor, turned our thoughts, our content, into the reader-friendly copy you now hold in your hands.

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not say a very special thank you to Kassie Graves, senior acquisitions editor; Maggie Stanley, associate editor; Elizabeth Luizzi, editorial assistant; and Eric Garner, production editor at SAGE Publications who not only kept us focused and on time, but also provided the much needed support throughout the development of this text.

This book is dedicated to our students, our clients, and our colleagues who have helped us better understand the helping process and the dynamics of change.