

Counseling Competency Exam
Doctorate of Counseling Psychology (Ed.D.)

The Counseling Competency Exam requires the presentation of a case in both verbal and written formats. **Unless you make other arrangements with your examiner, plan to give her/him a written copy of the case ten days prior to the oral exam.**

The following outline should be adhered to when preparing the case.

1. **Referral and Identifying Information:** This section should include how you came to be the client's therapist, as well as a brief description of the current circumstances under which they sought treatment.
2. **Psychosocial History:** Include relevant historical information provided by the client or via chart review, etc... Please use this section to describe your client's life, particularly episodes that you feel pertain to current difficulties.
3. **Formulation:** Choose a specific theoretical orientation and conceptualize your case within its framework. It is recommended that you choose either a cognitive behavioral, a psychodynamic, or a family systems theory approach. However, if you wish to employ a different theoretical orientation, check with the examiner to obtain prior approval. Provide specific examples of how your theory of choice provides insight to the client's difficulties. In addition, be able to defend your theoretical choice. During the presentation your examiner will question why you chose this particular theory over another. **You should be able to answer questions regarding viewing your case from theoretical orientations such as psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, and family systems.**
 - This means, that you can address your case from a CBT perspective and identify core schemas of your client and know how you would address them, what kind of homework you would assign, and how you would work with them in the session.
 - From a psychodynamic perspective, be able to identify early childhood issues, defense mechanisms, anticipate transference and countertransference issues, and recognize facets of object relations.
 - From a family systems view, be able to give an overview of the impact of the client's family of origin system and/or the current family system.

Note: For your chosen system you may need to provide more information than what is addressed above.

4. **Five Axis Diagnosis and Treatment Plan:** Provide a thorough diagnosis based on the data presented thus far, including the appropriate DSM-IV-TR codes. Please explain why you chose particular diagnoses. Also create a **treatment plan** for your client, with specific types of therapy and interventions. Make sure to address how your theoretical framework compliments you treatment plan.
5. **Typical Session:** Provide your idea of what a typical session might look like based on your theoretical framework, diagnosis, and treatment plan. Focus on what types of interventions you might use, how the client would respond, and how treatment ultimately seeks to help the client. It is not necessary to provide a sample transcript of the session, but do so if you feel it helps to describe a typical session.
6. **Self-Analysis:** Finally, examine your role as a therapist with this client. Address your thoughts on the transference and countertransference and/or facets of the therapeutic interaction that may be helpful or problematic. If your own personal reactions impacted the case, how did you handle it? Also speak to how your therapeutic style contributed to the therapy.

After your paper has been reviewed, a faculty member will hear your presentation, following the above outline. Be prepared to defend your formulation, as well as answer questions pertinent to the therapy outcome and your role as therapist.