

Exhibit 2-4: ACA Counselor Competencies: Awareness of Clients' Worldviews

Attitudes and beliefs:

- Culturally skilled counselors are aware of their negative and positive emotional reactions toward other racial and ethnic groups and recognize that these reactions may prove detrimental to the counseling relationship. They are willing to contrast their own beliefs and attitudes with those of clients from diverse cultures in a nonjudgmental fashion.
- Culturally skilled counselors are aware of the stereotypes and preconceived notions they may hold toward other racial and ethnic minority groups.

Knowledge:

- Culturally skilled counselors possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group(s) with whom they are working. They are aware of the life experiences, cultural heritages, and historical backgrounds of clients from cultures other than their own. This competence is strongly linked to the minority identity development models available in the literature.
- Culturally skilled counselors understand how race, cultural group, ethnicity, and other factors can affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestation of mental disorders, help-seeking behavior, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of various counseling approaches.
- Culturally skilled counselors understand and have knowledge of sociopolitical influences upon the lives of racial and ethnic minorities. They understand that factors such as immigration issues, poverty, racism, stereotyping, and powerlessness can affect self-esteem and self-concept in the counseling process.

Skills:

- Culturally skilled counselors familiarize themselves with relevant research and the latest findings regarding mental health and mental disorders that affect various ethnic and racial groups. They actively seek out educational experiences that enrich their knowledge, understanding, and cross-cultural skills for more effective counseling behavior.
- Culturally skilled counselors are actively involved with minority individuals outside of the counseling setting (community events, social and political functions, celebrations, friendships, neighborhood groups, etc.); their perspective of minorities is more than an academic/helping exercise.

Source: American Counseling Association Web site (http://www.counseling.org/docs/competencies/cross-cultural_competencies_and_objectives.pdf). Adapted with permission.