



Models for Designing and Using Distance Guidance

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Coping With Overwhelming Information

- Internet Web sites are an increasingly popular source of information
- Easy to become overwhelmed by the amount and diversity of information on the Internet
- Make very selective use of Web sites as homework resources



Coping With Overwhelming Information

- Become familiar with a reasonable number of Web sites relevant to typical client concerns
- Recommend specific and manageable portions of a Web site addressing a specific client need



Coping With Overwhelming Information

- When client information needs cannot be met with typical sites
 - Model good information seeking behavior during the counseling session
 - Locate valid sources of information that have the potential to meet the client's needs



Coping With Overwhelming Information

- Use a model that helps clients limit the scope of information by linking Web site content with specific client goals



Model for Client Web-Site Use

- Three goals for client use of Web sites
 1. Help the client to *understand* the nature of his or her problem
 2. Assist the client to *act* in ways that help to solve his or her problem
 3. Help the client to better *cope* with problems that cannot be completely solved



Understand the Problem

- Help the client to *understand* the nature of his or her problem
 - Review a portion of a Web site that explains what many individuals experience when they have a specific problem



Understand the Problem

- Potential client outcomes
 - Understand the typical causes of the client's problem
 - May be theory-based
 - Understand how often other individuals have the same problem
 - “I am not the only person with this problem”



Understand the Problem

- Potential client outcomes
 - Understand that the client's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are often similar to other's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
 - Understand that others have successfully solved the same problem
 - Instills a sense of hope without guaranteeing success in solving the problem



Understand the Problem

■ Potential client outcomes

- Understand any theory that can provide a basis for taking action to solve the problem
- Facilitate communication between the practitioner and the client by providing a common vocabulary related to the problem
- Facilitate communication between the client and other service providers



Act to Solve the Problem

- Assist the client to **act** in ways that help to solve his or her problem
 - Review a portion of the Web site that provides descriptions of specific counseling interventions



Act to Solve the Problem

- Potential client outcomes
 - Understand the nature of various intervention options
 - Create more realistic expectations for change and less anxiety about the process of receiving help



Act to Solve the Problem

- Potential client outcomes
 - Understand the pros and cons of various intervention options
 - Improve client self-esteem by making the client a more active participant in intervention decisions



Cope with Problems Not Yet Solved

- Help the client to better **cope** with problems that cannot be completely solved
 - Review a portion of the Web site that provides personal statements of individuals who have experienced, and coped with, similar problems
 - Participate in a virtual support group for clients with similar problems by reading and posting messages on a limited access bulletin board



Cope with Problems Not Yet Solved

- Understand specific coping strategies that are available
- Understand how others have successfully coped with similar problems
- Understand when and how to seek additional services in the future



Web vs. Practitioner-Based Information

- Practitioners can give clients information or refer them to valid information from carefully selected Web sites
- There are benefits in providing information to clients via the Internet



Web vs. Practitioner-Based Information

- Web-based information may be more current and more complete than information provided by a practitioner
 - Assumes that the information provided on the Web is valid
 - This assumption is not always true
- Obtaining Web-based information may reduce the expectation that the practitioner's role is to provide expert information after the client carefully explains his or her problem



Web vs. Practitioner-Based Information

- Clients may react negatively to information provided by a practitioner and engage in “Yes, but...” interactions
- Emphasize a *collaborative* role
 - The practitioner focuses on helping the client *find* and effectively *use* information, rather than emphasizing an *authoritarian* role where the practitioner focuses on *providing* information
- May reduce negative responses to perceived “advice” given by an authority figure



Web vs. Practitioner-Based Information

- Making greater use of Web-based information may help the practitioner become less focused on being knowledgeable about an ever increasing amount of information
- Helping clients better understand why they are reluctant to use the information they have obtained is a better use of time in counseling



Web vs. Practitioner-Based Information

- Help clients assume more responsibility for decision making since they are not dependent on the practitioner for getting access to information
- Learning how to obtain and effectively use information may help the client to be a better problem solver in the future



Web vs. Practitioner-Based Information

- The practitioner will always provide information to clients
 - Some information is so specific or localized that it is not available on the Internet
- The practitioner needs to judge when to provide information to the client and when to recommend that the client obtain information from a specific portion of a Web site



Role of the Practitioner

- The role of the practitioner is shifting from *providing* information to collaboratively helping clients *find* and effectively *use* information



Four-Step Counseling Model

- A four-step counseling model can help clients effectively use a Web site in completing homework
 1. Screening
 2. Recommending
 3. Orienting
 4. Follow-up



Screening

- Purpose

- Determine the likelihood that using Web-based assessments, information resources, and opportunities for interaction with others will help the client in problem solving



Screening

- Develop an effective counseling relationship with the client
- Clarify the nature of the client's problem
- Agree on the client's goals for counseling
- Determine whether or not homework is appropriate at this point in counseling



Screening

- Collaboratively determine the client's readiness for problem solving



Screening

- Determine the practitioner support necessary for the client to benefit from assessments, information sources, and interaction with others
- Decide on the appropriateness of using the Internet to gain access to assessments, information sources, and individuals
- Determine if the client has the ability to use a Web browser and navigate a typical Web site



Screening

■ Potential client outcomes

- Established a good relationship with his or her practitioner
- Concluded that the practitioner understands his or her situation and is capable of helping with problem solving
- Clarified his or her problems and counseling goals



Screening

- Potential client outcomes
 - Concluded that the practitioner will provide the support that he or she needs
 - Understand how assessments, information, and interacting with others may help with problem solving
 - Decided that the Internet is an appropriate source of assessments, information, or interaction with others



Screening

- Potential client outcomes
 - Concluded that the practitioner will provide the support that he or she needs
 - Understand how assessments, information, and interacting with others may help with problem solving
 - Decided that the Internet is an appropriate source of assessments, information, or interaction with others



Recommending

■ Purpose

- Suggest specific Web-site content to increase the likelihood that the client will use the resources that are appropriate for his or her needs



Recommending

- Maintain an effective counseling relationship with the client
- Determine whether or not an appropriate Web site is available to help the client complete his or her homework assignment
- Collaborate with the client to create a brief written plan for using Web-site content and features that relate to specific client needs



Recommending

- Help the client understand which of his or her needs might be met by using a Web site and which needs might be met by other resources
- Whenever possible, provide the client with choices among options for obtaining information
- With client input, decide if any additional barriers exist that would limit client access to Internet Web sites



Recommending

- Before recommending a Web site for client use, ensure that the site meets applicable ethical standards (such as validity)
- Explore any potential multicultural issues the might impact the use of the Web site
- Influence client expectations that successful use of the Web site is generally possible
- Influence client expectations that the client is capable of and will follow-through with the use of the recommended portions of the Web



Recommending

■ Potential client outcomes

- Achieved an understanding of how his or her needs can be potentially met by Web-site use
- Formulated an initial plan for using the Web site, as well as any other appropriate resources
- Concluded that the practitioner is competent and available to help him or her make effective use of the Web site



Orienting

■ Purpose

- Help ensure that the client makes effective use of a Web site by promoting a realistic understanding of the potential benefits, limitations, and functioning of the site in relation to his or her needs



Orienting

- Maintain an effective counseling relationship with the client
- Briefly review the agreed upon plan for using the Web site



Orienting

- Briefly review the following points
 - Potential benefits and limitations of the site
 - Navigation of the site
 - Help features that are available
 - Privacy of personal data collected on the site
 - Supplemental information from external links
 - Estimated time required to use the site



Orienting

- Clients with low readiness for problem solving will need more careful orientation to the Web site
 - More careful orientation may reduce anxiety associated with using a Web site
 - Importance of practitioner modeling of information seeking behavior
 - Avoid overwhelming the client with more orientation information than the client can understand and use at one time



Orienting

- Some of orientation information can be presented via traditional print materials
- Discuss the usefulness of taking time to reflect upon what the client has learned in using the Web site before continuing on with further counseling and Web site use
- Briefly indicate to the client any information on the site that documents the quality of the site



Orienting

■ Potential client outcomes

- Achieved a greater understanding of how specific portions of the Web site might be used to meet his or her needs
- Perceived him or herself as capable of successfully using the portions of the Web site that the practitioner has recommended
- Continued to conclude that the practitioner is competent and available to help him or her make effective use of the Web site



Follow-Up

■ Purpose

- Help ensure that clients have appropriately used Web-site assessments, information sources, and opportunities for interacting with others, to meet their previously identified needs



Follow-Up

- Maintain an effective counseling relationship with the client
- Ask the client to describe the nature of his or her experience using the Web site, and note any problems that need resolving



Follow-Up

- Help the client to review his or her progress toward meeting the needs that were originally identified in counseling
 - If the client's needs are still unmet, recommend the use of additional portions of the Web site or other resources
 - Pay particular attention to potential inappropriate use of the site and potential negative thinking about learning



Follow-Up

- Recommend appropriate further resources and services that may be needed
- Help the client understand how the learning resulting from using the Web site can be generalized to future problem solving



Follow-Up

- Potential client outcomes
 - Fully used the Web-site to meet needs
 - Evaluated progress toward meeting needs
 - Identified other resources and services needed
 - Be better prepared to use portions of another Web site meet similar needs
 - Conclude that the practitioner is competent