The Potential for Success and Failure of Computer Applications in Counseling and Guidance

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Organization of the Presentation

- Terminology
- Maximizing the Human Dimension
- Improving Access to Counseling
- Maximizing Learning Opportunity
- Improving Access to Guidance Resources
- Roles of the Counselor
- Potential Reasons for Success
- Potential Reasons for Failure
- Actions for Maximizing Success
Terminology

- **Counseling involves**
  - a relationship between a client and a counselor over time
  - on an individual or group basis
  - for the purpose of helping the client (or groups of clients) to solve or prevent problems.

- **Guidance involves**
  - the creation and delivery of text, graphic, audio, and video resources
  - in a self-help mode to individuals without counselor intervention
  - also involves the use of resources in a counselor-supported mode as part of a guidance intervention.
Combining Counseling & Guidance

- Self-help guidance resources used as homework in counseling
- Passive self-help guidance resources orient users to counseling benefits
- Proactive self-help guidance resources indicate when counseling is needed
- Integrate resource use (homework & self-help) with counseling in the “teachable moment”
- Level of counseling support fits client needs
Computer Contributions in Counseling

- Maximizing the human dimension in counseling
- Improving access to counseling
Maximizing the Human Dimension

- Human problems with repetitive tasks
  - Reduced accuracy and increased boredom
  - Examples: Test scoring, delivering information, orientation

- Client confusion: bored with task vs. bored with client

- Computers more accurate and less bored with repetitive tasks

- Allocating repetitive tasks to the computer allows the counselor to spend more time on more human tasks
  - See more clients or see clients longer
Improving Access to Counseling

• Use of the Internet as a Necessity
  – Individuals with disabilities
  – Individuals in remote geographic areas
  – Access to counselors with specialized expertise
  – Reluctant clients (anonymity)

• Use of the Internet as a Convenience
  – Services outside of normal business hours
  – Services at residence or place of work
Improving Access to Counseling

• Advantages of asynchronous interaction
  – Time to reflect on interactions
  – Freedom from scheduling limitations
  – Creation of a permanent record

• Disadvantages
  – Limited non-verbal data
Improving Access to Counseling

• Advantages of synchronous interaction
  – Closer to traditional counseling
  – Easier to communicate nonverbally
  – Long experience with telephone counseling
  – Equivalence vs. effectiveness

• Disadvantages
  – Limited technology (currently)
  – Limited access to the Internet (currently)
  – Ethical and credentialing problems
  – Limited use at present
Improving Access to Counseling

- Cybercounseling and telephone counseling should complement not replace traditional face-to-face counseling.
- Our task is to select a counseling medium that best meets a client’s needs in a socially responsible manner.
Computer Contributions in Guidance

- Maximizing opportunities for learning
- Improving access to guidance resources
Maximizing Learning Opportunity

- Computers add interactivity to learning
  - Increased motivation from individual control
- Computers add flexibility
  - Learner choice (text, graphic, audio, video) allows choice from among learning styles
- PC-based software superior to Internet-based software (currently)
Improving Access to Resources

• Less controversial and more used than Cybercounseling
• Assessment (interests)
• Information (job banking)
• Instruction (job interviewing)
• Extensive use for employment
• Works in both self-help and counselor-assisted modes
Roles of the counselor

- Counseling interventions
  - Screening
  - Orientation
  - Follow-up
- Selection of valid, unbiased software
- Ensuring equity of access
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Effective implementation
- System evaluation
Potential Reasons for Success

- Freedom of access by individuals
  - Strong demand for self-help resources
- Evolution of the Internet into the information highway (Non-PC Market)
- Apparent effectiveness of applications
  - Despite initial misgivings of practitioners
- Growth in distance learning
  - Distance guidance necessary for distance learning
Potential Reasons for Failure

• Implementation problems
  – Lack of participation in decision making
  – Poor integration of applications
  – Inadequate training
  – Poor evaluation
Potential Reasons for Failure

• Ethical concerns
  – Confidentiality
  – Invalid assessments and information
  – Lack of counselor support when needed
  – Counselor dependency
  – Limited access to the Internet
  – Limited awareness of location-specific issues
  – Lack of clarity about practitioner credentials
  – Auditory and visual privacy at home or work
For Additional Information

www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/

Thank You