Self-training on Assessment guide for career and guidance counselling

Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec

Introduction

This document is the first of three time training on the Assessment Guide in particular and on assessment in a larger sense. This training has the following objectives:

- Become familiar with the contents of the guide
- Appropriating the framework presented
- Recognize the differences between professional practice and benchmarks proposed in the guide
- Assess the needs for the development of its assessment competencies

Confidentially

This self-training approach has been developed with the idea of promoting openness and a realistic self-reflection. In this sense, the confidentiality of responses should enable you to look at your practice and identify your competencies as much as your areas of improvement and development. Such self-reflection is important for a competency so essential to the practice. Indeed, the assessment, which consists of a clinical judgment to estimate and assess the situation of the person, is the main tool of a continually adapted intervention.

A training opportunity that counts for the lifelong learning policy

The Order lifelong learning policy aims at maintaining and developing competencies related to the field of practice. It allows members to acquire on a regular basis, skills and knowledge that improve their practice. In the context of this policy, this self-training activity worths 7 hours of training in the category A, that is, participation to structured activities.

Finally, this self-training activity is an opportunity for learning and self-reflection on its practice of assessment and evaluation. Although filling out this document does not attest the competency in assessment, it may contribute to developing the reflective skills on this topic.

Questionnaire

After reading the Assessment Guide, what is your reaction?

How does this perspective on assessment similar to your practice?

How does this differ from it?

Parallel with a real case

In order to realize your reflective thinking activity, you can apply the knowledge presented in the guide and in this self-training to a real case that you encountered in your practice. Also, before continuing this self-training activity, you are offered a choice. Depending on your learning style, you can:

- First make an inventory of elements of your assessment practice by filling out this questionnaire to confirm or validate then respond to questions from the case study at the end of this questionnaire.
- Begin by taking the pulse of your practice by answering questions from the case study to compare then to what is proposed in the guide in answering this questionnaire.

1 Three areas of assessment

Which aspects of psychological functioning do you assess?

Check the aspects you usually assess	✓
The person's characteristics	
Interests	
Values	
Aptitudes	
Personality traits	
Dynamic organization of his or her experience	
Beliefs	
Thoughts	
Emotions	
Behaviours	
Effects on everyday life (for example, self-regulation and self-help modalities, level of self-esteem and confidence, coping strategies)	
Existence of mental or neuropsychological disorders, situations of disability, adjustment difficulties in educational or work environments, or other disorders that can be identified through recognized standards in mental health	
Other aspects of psychological functioning?	

Which personal resources do you assess?

Check the resources you usually assess	✓
The person's knowledge and level of being informed about areas such as: self-awareness, knowledge of the labour market and available training options, and knowledge of available services and opportunities in a given context	
Skills and formal and informal knowledge acquired through experience at school or work, or through social involvement or any other personal activity	
Qualifications required for integration into certain school and work contexts: educational achievement, area of expertise, specialized qualifications, languages spoken, computer skills, certificates of qualification, etc.	
Health factors	
Sociodemographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, legal status, civil status, and marital, parental or family responsibilities, financial resources and transportation	
Other personal resources?	

Which environmental conditions do you assess?

Check the conditions you usually assess	✓
Intimate spaces in which a person maintains relations with family and friends, as well as educational, professional or social groups and environments	
Quality of contacts, shared interests, received values and role models that affect individual behaviour	
Structural conditions, such as a person's socioeconomic status, his or her parents' levels of education and gainful activities, social representations of gender roles and other social stereotypes, and the characteristics associated with certain professions	
Structural and functional conditions that almost imperceptibly direct and control individual lives: economic situation, law and regulations, social and employment policies, culture and customs, conceptions of the role of work in an individual's life, labour market changes, technological developments, globalization, and the meaning associated with social belonging	
Other environmental conditions?	

In one or another of the three preceding sections, you have added items? You can validate the relevance and the choice of the appropriate category with peers.

Are there items you should evaluate more often, longer or with more tools to obtain a sufficient and complete portrait of the person?

What can you improve or do differently?

How can you do?

2 Four phases of assessment

What are your means of gathering information?

Check the means you usually gather information	✓
Gathering of personal and sociodemographic data	
Intervention-based self-exploration and self-awareness	
Observation of relational dynamic	
Self-assessment exercises focusing on self-awareness	
Exploration activities	
Psychometric instruments	
Strategies for mobilizing cognitive, emotional and behavioural resources	
Reflective debriefing on a field experience approach	
Observation in the context of educational and work situations	
Assessments and interviews reports provided by other professionals	
Self-description of the educational and professional experiences	
Documents related to educational and professional evaluations and experiences	
Other means of gathering information?	

What are your means of decoding information?

Check the means you usually decode information	✓
Use of theoretical and conceptual interpretation references	
Re-evaluation of the request for service	
Consideration of the sociocultural context	
Other means of decoding information?	

What are your means of analyzing information?

Check the means you usually analyze information	✓
Understanding the influence of individual and sociocultural differences	
Examining the person's ability to understand his or her situation	
Consulting other professionals	
Establishing and verifying relevant connections between different informations	
Interpreting psychometric results	
Other means of analyzing information?	

What are your means of communicating information?

Check the means you usually communicate information	✓
Taking into account how the information could be understood and interpreted by the person	
Oral summary or report	
Professional opinion	
Personalized education and professional information	
Psychometric results	
Written report	
Other means of communicating information?	

How can you improve your assessment process?

What can you do differently or better at each phase?

3 The different points in the process

How do you integrate the assessment at each points of the intervention process, either before, beginning, during, end and after (see Table 2, p. 9 of the guide)?

4 Assessment defined

As recalled in the introduction of this training, assessment involves clinical judgment to estimate the situation of the person. Based on your answers to this questionnaire and case study that accompanies it, how does your assessment practice allow you to pose this clinical judgment?

What could help you doing it better?

Case study

Choose from the people you helped in the past years, a case which represents well your practice. Feel free to use your notes to answer the following questions. In this particular situation:

What was the context or request for service?

Which aspects of psychological functioning have you assessed?

Which personal resources have you assessed?

Which environmental conditions have you assessed?

How did you gather information?

How did you decode it?

How did you analyze it?

How did you communicate it?

At which points of the intervention process (before, beginning, during, end, after) you've assessed the person's situation?

Fact sheet on my skills development

Looking at yourself and your work environment, can you identify obstacles for an assessment practice as presented in the Guide?

How can I remove, reduce or overcome these obstacles?

What are my training needs?

Check your training needs	✓
I need to better know assessment of certain aspects of psychological functioning	
I need to better know assessment of certain personal resources	
I need to better know assessment of certain environmental conditions	
I need to master other means of gathering information	
I need to master other means of decoding information	
I need to master other means of analyzing information	
I need to master other means of communicating information	
I need tools to better integrate continuous assessment into my processes	
Other training needs?	

Which means I intend to take to meet these training needs?