

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

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# Organization of the Presentation

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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 manners

# Computer Contributions in Guidance

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- Maximizing opportunities for learning
- Improving access to guidance resources

# Maximizing Learning Opportunity

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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[www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/](http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/)

Thank You