

COUNSELING THEORIES PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	5
Answers	8
Explanations	10
Next Steps	15

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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1. Personalization in CBT is described as?

- A. Tendency for individuals to relate events to themselves when there is no basis for this connection
- B. A technique for shifting personal responsibility to others
- C. The process of personalizing therapy goals
- D. A method to attribute external events to random chance

2. Selective abstraction is best described as:

- A. Distorted views of forming conclusions based on an isolated detail of an event
- B. Overgeneralization from one event to many situations
- C. Focusing on the overall context rather than details
- D. Predicting future outcomes from past events

3. In Adlerian phenomenological orientation, which description best captures the counselor's stance?

- A. Attempting to view the world from the client's point of view
- B. Spitting in the client's soup
- C. Reducing the usefulness of a client's manipulative behavior to spoil the effects
- D. Focusing on behavior theory

4. In reality theory, the CLR role is best described as which?

- A. Minimal, passive listening
- B. One of concern, warmth, and proactive push toward responsibility
- C. Punitive and judgmental
- D. Detached and indifferent

5. Who founded reality theory?

- A. Rogers
- B. Skinner
- C. Glasser
- D. Maslow

- 6. Which statement best describes a contribution of person-centered therapy?**
- A. The therapist is an expert who directs therapy
 - B. The therapy is technique-centered
 - C. The client is passive
 - D. The therapy is relationship-centered rather than technique-centered
- 7. In reality theory, the client is expected to do what regarding goals?**
- A. Assume responsibility for deciding goals, commit to them, and plan actions
 - B. Let the counselor set all goals
 - C. Ignore goals
 - D. Rely on past to choose goals
- 8. In Gestalt terms, projection refers to disowning parts of ourselves and blaming them on the environment.**
- A. Disowning the parts of ourselves and blaming them on the environment
 - B. Turning back to ourselves what we would like to do to others
 - C. Confluence with others' views
 - D. Dream interpretation
- 9. Which of the following is NOT listed as one of Perls' five layers of neurosis?**
- A. Phony layer
 - B. Defensive layer
 - C. Implosive layer
 - D. Explosive layer
- 10. A commonly cited limitation of existential therapy is that it:**
- A. Has a fully standardized treatment manual
 - B. Is supported by extensive empirical research
 - C. Lacks a systematic procedure and has limited empirical evidence
 - D. Is easily taught to all therapists

Answers

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1. A
2. A
3. A
4. B
5. C
6. D
7. A
8. A
9. B
10. C

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Explanations

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1. Personalization in CBT is described as?

- A. Tendency for individuals to relate events to themselves when there is no basis for this connection**
- B. A technique for shifting personal responsibility to others
- C. The process of personalizing therapy goals
- D. A method to attribute external events to random chance

Personalization in CBT refers to a cognitive distortion where a person interprets events as directly about themselves or assumes they are the cause of things that are not actually under their control. It involves taking external happenings and linking them to one's own actions or character without adequate evidence. This tendency leads to self-blame and overgeneralized conclusions like "this is happening because of me" or "everyone is reacting to me," even when there's little or no justification. In therapy, recognizing personalization helps clients test the evidence for such connections, separate what is their responsibility from what isn't, and develop more balanced interpretations. Shifting personal responsibility to others describes blaming or externalizing rather than internalizing; it's not about linking events to oneself. Personalizing therapy goals would be about how goals are set, not about misattributing events. Attributing external events to random chance involves seeing events as random rather than connected to oneself, which is not what personalization describes.

2. Selective abstraction is best described as:

- A. Distorted views of forming conclusions based on an isolated detail of an event**
- B. Overgeneralization from one event to many situations
- C. Focusing on the overall context rather than details
- D. Predicting future outcomes from past events

Selective abstraction is a cognitive distortion where you fixate on a single detail of an event and draw a broad, negative conclusion from it, ignoring other information that would provide a fuller view. Because only that isolated piece is considered, the interpretation becomes distorted. For example, if one coworker frowns, you might conclude you're disliked by everyone, overlooking the possibility that they're stressed, had a rough morning, or that their mood isn't about you. That single detail drives the overall judgment. This description matches the idea of forming a distorted conclusion from an isolated detail. The other options describe different patterns: overgeneralization expands one detail into many situations; focusing on the overall context rather than details is the opposite of selective abstraction; and predicting future outcomes from past events is about forecasting rather than distorting a present interpretation.

3. In Adlerian phenomenological orientation, which description best captures the counselor's stance?

- A. Attempting to view the world from the client's point of view**
- B. Spitting in the client's soup
- C. Reducing the usefulness of a client's manipulative behavior to spoil the effects
- D. Focusing on behavior theory

Understanding the client's subjective reality is central in Adlerian phenomenology. The counselor seeks to grasp the world as the client experiences it, suspending personal judgments to really hear the client's story, values, goals, and social context. This stance supports collaboration and helps the client feel understood, which is essential for guiding growth and reorientation within their unique lifestyle and sense of belonging. Spitting in the client's soup implies confrontationally challenging or undermining the client's worldview, which isn't in line with Adlerian empathy and respect. Focusing on behavior theory points toward a different therapeutic tradition that emphasizes observable actions rather than the client's subjective meaning. The idea of reducing manipulative behavior to spoil its effects describes a tactic rather than the counselor's clinical stance, whereas Adlerian practice centers on understanding motive and meaning within the client's frame of reference.

4. In reality theory, the CLR role is best described as which?

- A. Minimal, passive listening
- B. One of concern, warmth, and proactive push toward responsibility**
- C. Punitive and judgmental
- D. Detached and indifferent

Reality therapy builds change from a warm, engaged counselor–client relationship. The counselor's role is to show genuine care and respect and to actively guide the client toward taking responsibility for their choices. This means listening with empathy, displaying warmth, and then proactively helping the client assess what they want, what they're doing to get it, and how they can plan to change. That combination—caring and warmth plus a proactive push toward responsibility—best captures what the counselor–client relationship should accomplish in Reality Therapy. Minimal passive listening wouldn't establish enough trust or momentum for change. A punitive and judgmental stance undermines the collaborative, noncoercive spirit that Reality Therapy relies on. Being detached or indifferent breaks the supportive connection needed for clients to feel safe enough to own their decisions and commit to a plan.

5. Who founded reality theory?

- A. Rogers
- B. Skinner
- C. Glasser**
- D. Maslow

Reality therapy is a counseling approach created by William Glasser. He developed Choice Theory and Reality Therapy in the 1960s to help people focus on their present behavior and take responsibility for making better choices to meet their basic needs, such as belonging, power, freedom, fun, and survival. The emphasis is on what the client can do now to affect their life, rather than digging into past events or relying on external rewards. A practical tool often used with this approach is the WDEP process—clarifying what the person Wants, what they're Doing, evaluating whether those actions are working, and making a Plan to change. This approach is distinct from what Rogers, Skinner, or Maslow are known for: Rogers is associated with client-centered therapy emphasizing unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruence; Skinner with behaviorism and operant conditioning; Maslow with the hierarchy of needs and self-actualization. Among these, William Glasser is the founder of reality therapy.

6. Which statement best describes a contribution of person-centered therapy?

- A. The therapist is an expert who directs therapy
- B. The therapy is technique-centered
- C. The client is passive
- D. The therapy is relationship-centered rather than technique-centered**

The key idea is that growth in person-centered therapy comes from the quality of the client–therapist relationship, not from applying a set of techniques. Carl Rogers stressed a nondirective stance where the therapist provides a safe, accepting, and empathic environment—unconditional positive regard and genuineness—so the client can explore and understand themselves. The therapist acts as a facilitative presence rather than an expert who directs the course of therapy. This approach treats the client as an active agent capable of self-directed change, rather than a passive recipient of guidance. Because of that emphasis on the relationship and the client's self-discovery, saying the therapy is relationship-centered captures its essential contribution more accurately than focusing on technique, directives, or passivity.

7. In reality theory, the client is expected to do what regarding goals?

- A. Assume responsibility for deciding goals, commit to them, and plan actions**
- B. Let the counselor set all goals
- C. Ignore goals
- D. Rely on past to choose goals

Reality therapy centers on personal responsibility and taking deliberate action to meet present and future needs. The client is encouraged to identify what they want, commit to those goals, and plan concrete steps to achieve them. This emphasis on self-chosen goals and action helps clients feel in control of their change and makes the plan more likely to be carried out. The counselor's role is to guide and support, not to set the goals for the client. Choosing goals for someone else undermines the sense of ownership that reality therapy aims to cultivate. Focusing on the past or ignoring goal setting would also clash with the approach's present- and future-oriented, action-focused stance.

8. In Gestalt terms, projection refers to disowning parts of ourselves and blaming them on the environment.

A. Disowning the parts of ourselves and blaming them on the environment

B. Turning back to ourselves what we would like to do to others

C. Confluence with others' views

D. Dream interpretation

Projection in Gestalt therapy is a defense where you disown your own internal experiences—feelings, impulses, or parts of yourself—and attribute them to the environment or to others. This helps keep your self-image intact by shifting responsibility for those inner experiences outward. The statement captures this dynamic: you're blaming the external world for what originates inside you. Other terms describe different processes. Turning back onto yourself what you'd like to do to others is retroflexion, a separate mechanism where you direct actions or impulses inward. Confluence refers to losing boundaries and blending with others, making it hard to separate self from others. Dream interpretation is not a core Gestalt concept; it aligns more with traditional psychodynamic approaches. This helps show why projection specifically means attributing your own inner experiences to the outside world.

9. Which of the following is NOT listed as one of Perls' five layers of neurosis?

A. Phony layer

B. Defensive layer

C. Implosive layer

D. Explosive layer

Perls' five layers of neurosis describe how a person's defensiveness and contact with experience unfold from outward masks to deeper, more authentic experience. The layers named explicitly are the phony layer, where a mask is worn; the phobic layer, driven by fear and avoidance; the implosive layer, in which defenses break down and painful feelings surface; and the explosive layer, where pent-up energy is released. The fifth layer is described in texts in terms of a deeper, more authentic mode of experiencing, but it is not called a defensive layer. Because a defensive layer isn't one of the labeled stages in Perls' sequence, that option is the one that doesn't fit the list.

10. A commonly cited limitation of existential therapy is that it:

A. Has a fully standardized treatment manual

B. Is supported by extensive empirical research

C. Lacks a systematic procedure and has limited empirical evidence

D. Is easily taught to all therapists

A key limitation of existential therapy is its lack of a fixed, standardized procedure and the relative scarcity of rigorous empirical evidence supporting its outcomes. This approach centers on deeply personal questions about meaning, freedom, and responsibility, so therapists tailor interventions to each client rather than apply a universal protocol. That personalization makes it difficult to define a consistent treatment model or replicate results across clients, which in turn challenges researchers trying to study effectiveness in large, controlled trials. Consequently, existential therapy is often viewed as flexible and philosophically rich, but less amenable to standardization and broad empirical validation compared with more manualized therapies.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

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We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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