

North Carolina Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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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. During the termination phase of counseling, which client reaction is commonly observed?**
 - A. Defensiveness**
 - B. Acting out behavior**
 - C. Apathy**
 - D. Lack of trust**
- 2. The quality of counseling is directly influenced by the counselor's ability to:**
 - A. Formulate and carry out realistic personal and professional goals**
 - B. Interpret the deeper meaning of problems**
 - C. Analyze client problems**
 - D. Convince clients to change**
- 3. Which counselor statement is most appropriate when a client shows denial during an intake interview?**
 - A. "I'm not sure I understand. Let me check this out."**
 - B. "First you tell me one thing, then another. Which is really the truth?"**
 - C. "There's a lot of confusion in your story."**
 - D. "Addiction fosters denial."**
- 4. Which of the following does NOT qualify as a criterion for psychoactive substance dependence according to the DSM IV-TR?**
 - A. Substance often taken in larger amounts than the person intended**
 - B. Marked lack of initiative, interest or energy**
 - C. Frequent intoxication when expected to fulfill major role obligations**
 - D. One or more unsuccessful efforts to cut down substance use**
- 5. When assessing a client, which factor is least likely to provide insight into their treatment needs?**
 - A. The client's history of substance use**
 - B. The client's current coping strategies**
 - C. The responses of the client's family**
 - D. The client's personal interests and hobbies**

6. What pattern of drinking is associated with the term "alcoholism"?

- A. A lack of tolerance for alcohol.**
- B. Frequent short periods of sobriety.**
- C. The inability to control the amount one drinks.**
- D. Light drinking EXCEPT on weekends.**

7. According to Erikson, which task is to be accomplished during adulthood?

- A. Trust vs. Mistrust.**
- B. Integrity vs. Despair.**
- C. Identity vs. Role Confusion.**
- D. Intimacy vs. Isolation.**

8. Which of the following represents a harmful expectation a client might have about counseling?

- A. This counselor is a stranger, but maybe I can learn to trust her.**
- B. My counselor will direct me to do what I need to do, and everything will be OK.**
- C. My counselor will be a resource that I can use to resolve my problems.**
- D. The counselor's main concern and responsibility is to help me achieve my goals and objectives.**

9. What is the best example of a counselor effectively setting limits with a client?

- A. "We're here to discuss your alcohol problem - I don't want to talk about your marriage."**
- B. "Counseling is a very unstructured process - anything goes."**
- C. "Our meetings will consist of four 50-minute sessions at 10 a.m. each Wednesday."**
- D. "What's important is that I help you. I'll counsel you no matter what."**

10. The CAGE test assesses individuals with a drinking problem on which of the following aspects?

- A. Cutting down on drinking, feeling annoyed and guilty, and dealing with hangovers**
- B. Making a distinction between problem drinkers and alcoholics**
- C. Craving a drink, drinking alone, feeling guilty, and employment difficulties**
- D. Client perceptions, guilt, and "eye-openers"**

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. During the termination phase of counseling, which client reaction is commonly observed?

- A. Defensiveness**
- B. Acting out behavior**
- C. Apathy**
- D. Lack of trust**

During the termination phase of counseling, acting out behavior is often observed as a common client reaction. This phase can evoke a range of emotions, including anxiety, fear of loss, and uncertainty regarding life after counseling. Clients may feel vulnerable about the impending end of their therapeutic relationship, and as a way to cope with these feelings, they might engage in acting out behaviors. Such behaviors can manifest as challenges in expressing emotions appropriately or involuntary displays of frustration and insecurity. Clients might also resist the termination process itself or express anger or sadness in more impulsive or disruptive ways. This acting out can be a form of emotional release or a bid for attention, reflecting their struggles with the change that comes with ending the counseling relationship. Recognizing and processing these behaviors is crucial for both the client and counselor, as it presents an opportunity to address unresolved issues and reinforce the skills and insights gained during therapy. In contrast, defensiveness, apathy, and lack of trust, while they can occur in the termination phase, do not capture the dynamic emotional expression often seen with acting out behavior. Clients may become defensive as a means of self-protection, show apathy as a defense mechanism against loss, or express a lack of trust, particularly if the counseling process has

2. The quality of counseling is directly influenced by the counselor's ability to:

- A. Formulate and carry out realistic personal and professional goals**
- B. Interpret the deeper meaning of problems**
- C. Analyze client problems**
- D. Convince clients to change**

The ability to formulate and carry out realistic personal and professional goals is a critical aspect of effective counseling. This capability not only demonstrates a counselor's commitment to their own growth and development but also sets a standard for clients. When counselors have well-defined goals, they can model the process of goal setting and achievement for their clients, which is vital in the context of addiction treatment where progress can often feel slow or elusive. Additionally, achieving personal and professional goals helps counselors maintain a sense of purpose and direction in their practice, which in turn enhances the quality of the therapeutic relationship. Strong goal orientation enables counselors to provide more structured and focused sessions, helping clients navigate their challenges with clarity and motivation. By displaying and sharing their own goal-setting strategies, counselors can inspire clients to engage actively in their own recovery journeys. In the context of counseling, although understanding client problems, analyzing them, and encouraging clients to change are also important skills, they depend significantly on a counselor's foundational ability to set and pursue goals. A counselor who has not established personal and professional goals may lack the direction necessary to effectively support clients in their journey, ultimately diminishing the quality of their counseling services.

3. Which counselor statement is most appropriate when a client shows denial during an intake interview?

- A. "I'm not sure I understand. Let me check this out."**
- B. "First you tell me one thing, then another. Which is really the truth?"**
- C. "There's a lot of confusion in your story."**
- D. "Addiction fosters denial."**

The statement "I'm not sure I understand. Let me check this out." is the most appropriate response when a client exhibits denial during an intake interview. This approach demonstrates an empathetic and non-confrontational manner, which is essential in building rapport and trust with the client. Using such a statement indicates to the client that the counselor is genuinely interested in understanding their perspective rather than challenging or confronting them directly about their denial. This can encourage the client to open up more and express their thoughts and feelings without feeling attacked or judged. Moreover, this type of response focuses on clarifying the client's narrative and allows for the possibility of deeper exploration into their thoughts and experiences. By saying "let me check this out," the counselor conveys that they are willing to seek clarity and work alongside the client in unpacking their story, which can be particularly important when dealing with denial, as clients often need support in articulating their feelings and understanding their situation more fully.

4. Which of the following does NOT qualify as a criterion for psychoactive substance dependence according to the DSM IV-TR?

- A. Substance often taken in larger amounts than the person intended**
- B. Marked lack of initiative, interest or energy**
- C. Frequent intoxication when expected to fulfill major role obligations**
- D. One or more unsuccessful efforts to cut down substance use**

The criterion that does not qualify as a symptom of psychoactive substance dependence according to the DSM IV-TR is characterized by a marked lack of initiative, interest, or energy. This is more related to symptoms of psychological or mood disorders, such as depression, rather than being a direct indicator of substance dependence. In the context of substance dependence, the other criteria listed focus on specific behaviors associated with the misuse of substances. For instance, taking a substance in larger amounts than intended indicates a loss of control over usage, which is a core aspect of dependence. Frequent intoxication despite significant responsibilities emphasizes the negative impact of substance use on important areas of life. Lastly, making unsuccessful efforts to cut down on use reflects an awareness of the problem and a struggle with controlling substance intake, which directly ties to the concept of dependence. In summary, while a lack of initiative could be a result of substance abuse, it is not a defining criterion for dependence within the DSM IV-TR framework.

5. When assessing a client, which factor is least likely to provide insight into their treatment needs?

- A. The client's history of substance use**
- B. The client's current coping strategies**
- C. The responses of the client's family**
- D. The client's personal interests and hobbies**

The factor that is least likely to provide insight into a client's treatment needs is their personal interests and hobbies. While understanding a client's interests and hobbies can certainly contribute to building rapport and creating a supportive therapeutic environment, it primarily serves to enhance the therapeutic relationship rather than directly inform treatment planning. In contrast, a client's history of substance use, current coping strategies, and family responses are critical components that provide valuable insight into their treatment needs. The history of substance use reveals patterns, duration, and severity of substance-related issues, while current coping strategies highlight how the client deals with stress and triggers. The involvement and perspectives of family members can also influence treatment dynamics, identify support systems, and reveal any co-dependence or familial patterns that may need to be addressed in therapy. Therefore, the personal interests and hobbies, although useful for engagement, do not directly affect the assessment of treatment needs in the same way that the other factors do.

6. What pattern of drinking is associated with the term "alcoholism"?

- A. A lack of tolerance for alcohol.**
- B. Frequent short periods of sobriety.**
- C. The inability to control the amount one drinks.**
- D. Light drinking EXCEPT on weekends.**

The term "alcoholism" is commonly associated with a pattern of drinking characterized by the inability to control the amount one consumes. This condition, also referred to as "alcohol use disorder," manifests in individuals who find it challenging to limit their drinking, often leading to negative consequences in various aspects of their lives, including personal relationships, work, and health. Individuals who struggle with this issue may experience cravings for alcohol and a tendency to drink more than intended or for longer periods. This uncontrolled drinking is a central aspect that distinguishes alcoholism from other patterns of alcohol consumption. It is important to understand that this inability to regulate drinking can escalate over time, making intervention and help essential. The other options describe different aspects of drinking behaviors but do not encapsulate the core characteristic of alcoholism itself. For instance, a lack of tolerance for alcohol refers to a physiological response rather than the behavioral control associated with alcoholism. Frequent short periods of sobriety might suggest a cycle of binge drinking or attempts at moderation, while light drinking on weekends conveys a more controlled drinking habit, which is not indicative of the challenges associated with alcoholism.

7. According to Erikson, which task is to be accomplished during adulthood?

- A. Trust vs. Mistrust.**
- B. Integrity vs. Despair.**
- C. Identity vs. Role Confusion.**
- D. Intimacy vs. Isolation.**

In Erikson's psychosocial development theory, the task associated with adulthood is fundamentally about forming intimate relationships and balancing personal needs with social connections. The stage of "Intimacy vs. Isolation" occurs during young adulthood and focuses on the ability to forge deep, meaningful relationships. Successfully navigating this stage allows individuals to build intimate partnerships, friendships, and fulfill personal connections, which are crucial for emotional well-being. Failure to achieve intimacy can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, impacting one's ability to connect with others. Thus, this stage underscores the importance of emotional bonds and the challenges individuals may face in developing these close relationships. It is a critical phase that shapes one's social life and identity as an adult, laying the groundwork for future stages of development, particularly in establishing a sense of community and contributing to society. In contrast, the other stages mentioned represent different periods of life: "Trust vs. Mistrust" pertains to infancy, "Integrity vs. Despair" relates to old age, and "Identity vs. Role Confusion" focuses on adolescence. Each of these stages builds upon the outcomes of previous ones and serves as a foundation for the subsequent psychosocial challenges that individuals will face throughout their lives.

8. Which of the following represents a harmful expectation a client might have about counseling?

- A. This counselor is a stranger, but maybe I can learn to trust her.**
- B. My counselor will direct me to do what I need to do, and everything will be OK.**
- C. My counselor will be a resource that I can use to resolve my problems.**
- D. The counselor's main concern and responsibility is to help me achieve my goals and objectives.**

The statement "My counselor will direct me to do what I need to do, and everything will be OK" reflects a harmful expectation because it places the responsibility for change solely on the counselor rather than on the client. In an effective counseling relationship, clients are expected to take an active role in their own process of change and self-discovery. This expectation creates a perception that the counselor will simply provide answers and solutions without the involvement or effort from the client. It undermines the collaborative nature of counseling, which emphasizes that progress relies on the client's engagement, insight, and willingness to change. This perspective can lead to disappointment or frustration if the client believes that the counselor's guidance will solve all their problems or if they expect instant results. Healthy counseling requires mutual effort and accountability, where clients are encouraged to explore their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors alongside the counselor's support.

9. What is the best example of a counselor effectively setting limits with a client?

- A. "We're here to discuss your alcohol problem - I don't want to talk about your marriage."
- B. "Counseling is a very unstructured process - anything goes."
- C. "Our meetings will consist of four 50-minute sessions at 10 a.m. each Wednesday."**
- D. "What's important is that I help you. I'll counsel you no matter what."

The selection of the option reflecting the counselor's structured approach highlights the importance of setting clear boundaries and expectations within the counseling relationship. By specifying that meetings will consist of four 50-minute sessions at a designated time each week, the counselor creates a predictable framework that helps the client understand what to expect. This structure is essential in fostering a sense of safety and reliability, which can enhance the therapeutic process. Establishing such limits not only aids in the effective management of counseling sessions but also encourages clients to commit to their treatment by knowing when and how their sessions will occur. Consistency in scheduling is a vital aspect of successful counseling, as it allows clients to plan and prioritize their participation in the process. Additionally, it reaffirms the counselor's role in facilitating a focused environment, which is crucial for addressing the specific issues the client seeks help with.

10. The CAGE test assesses individuals with a drinking problem on which of the following aspects?

- A. Cutting down on drinking, feeling annoyed and guilty, and dealing with hangovers**
- B. Making a distinction between problem drinkers and alcoholics
- C. Craving a drink, drinking alone, feeling guilty, and employment difficulties
- D. Client perceptions, guilt, and "eye-openers"

The CAGE test is a widely used screening tool for identifying potential alcohol use disorders. The correct answer highlights key aspects of the test, capturing its primary focus on how drinking behavior affects the individual's life. The four components of the CAGE acronym specifically address the following areas: 1. ****Cutting down**** refers to the individual's sense of needing to reduce their drinking. 2. ****Annoyed**** relates to feelings of irritation when others criticize their drinking habits. 3. ****Guilty**** points to the individual's conscience regarding their alcohol consumption. 4. ****Eye-opener**** addresses the use of alcohol first thing in the morning as a method to relieve hangover symptoms or as a coping mechanism. These components effectively assess the individual's perception of their alcohol use, how it affects their emotions, and their motivations regarding moderation or cessation. This makes the CAGE test a focused tool for understanding issues related to problematic drinking behaviors.

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:

<https://ncalcoholanddrugcounselor.examzify.com>

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

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