SUMMIT
STUDY GUIDES

NCE

Diagnostic Assessment

Week 1 Diagnostic

40 Questions • 45 Minutes

Scored by the six NCE content domains • Original practice questions

Find your weak spots, then study the chapters that matter most

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How to Use This Material

Take this assessment in one sitting with a 45-minute timer, choosing the single BEST answer for each question. Then score it with the separate answer key and fill in the Weakness Map at the end of the key: count your correct answers in each NCE domain, and study the domains marked Focus first or Review before the others. The interactive version on the Diagnostic page of the NCE bonus site scores your Weakness Map automatically.

NCE Week 1 Diagnostic

40 questions • 45 minutes • Answer key and Weakness Map in the separate Answer Key file

1. Which individually administered intelligence test measures five cognitive factors (fluid reasoning, knowledge, quantitative reasoning, visual-spatial processing, and working memory) in both verbal and nonverbal domains and is normed from age 2 into late adulthood?

- **A.** Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, Second Edition
- **B.** Raven's Progressive Matrices
- **C.** Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fifth Edition
- **D.** Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales, Fifth Edition

2. Kara, 30, missed her last three sessions and has not returned two phone calls over three weeks. Agency policy allows case closure after 30 days without contact. What is the MOST appropriate step before closing her case?

- **A.** Leave the case open indefinitely in case she returns
- **B.** Send a letter inviting her back, listing resources and the closure date, and document efforts
- **C.** Close the case immediately and notify her insurer
- **D.** Contact her emergency contact to ask why she stopped attending

3. Kenji, a 4th grader, earns a grade-equivalent score of 7.2 on a 4th-grade reading test. His teacher suggests moving him to a 7th-grade reading class. What should the school counselor explain?

- **A.** The score is a percentile rank showing he outperformed 72% of 4th-grade readers
- **B.** The score means he did as well on this test as a typical 7th grader would, not that he has mastered 7th-grade material
- **C.** The score shows he has mastered the 7th-grade reading curriculum and is ready for 7th-grade placement
- **D.** The score is a stanine showing average performance for his grade

4. After eight sessions, Grace, 39, has made little progress on her original goal of improving sleep, and she has just lost her job, which is now her main concern. What should the counselor do with the treatment plan?

- **A.** Revise the plan together with Grace to reflect her current concerns
- **B.** Refer Grace elsewhere, because limited progress shows poor client-counselor fit
- **C.** Add the job loss to the plan without discussing it, to avoid overwhelming her
- **D.** Keep the plan unchanged until the original sleep goal has been fully reached

5. Over three sessions, Olivia, 36, has become increasingly compliant, agreeing with every suggestion while her homework goes undone and her affect flattens. Her counselor suspects an alliance rupture. According to Safran and Muran, this is best understood as a:

- **A.** confrontation rupture, best addressed by validating her unspoken anger at the counselor
- **B.** withdrawal rupture, best addressed by assigning simpler homework to rebuild her momentum
- **C.** confrontation rupture, best addressed by renegotiating the agreed-upon treatment goals
- **D.** withdrawal rupture, best addressed by gently exploring her experience of the relationship

6. Daniel, 32, tells his counselor that he has fallen in love with her and asks her to meet him for coffee outside of session. What is the counselor's most appropriate response?

- **A.** End counseling right away and refer him, since erotic transference cannot be worked through
- **B.** Firmly tell Daniel that such feelings are inappropriate and redirect him to his presenting concern
- **C.** Agree to one coffee meeting to protect the alliance, and document the clinical rationale
- **D.** Acknowledge his feelings, hold the professional boundary, and explore what the feelings mean in counseling

7. Tessa, 26, has complex trauma, cuts herself several times a week, and often dissociates in sessions. Using Herman's phase-oriented model, what should the first phase of treatment focus on?

- **A.** Establishing safety and building emotion regulation and stabilization skills
- **B.** Detailed processing of traumatic memories to reduce their emotional intensity
- **C.** Reconnection with relationships and building a meaningful life in the community
- **D.** Confronting the people responsible for the abuse to restore a sense of power

8. Six weeks after his wife's sudden death, LPC Rafael notices he is crying between sessions, losing track of what clients say, and dreading work. What should Rafael do according to the ACA Code of Ethics?

- **A.** Seek assistance for his impairment and limit or suspend services until he can practice safely
- **B.** Refer all clients permanently to colleagues and close his practice to avoid any harm
- **C.** Disclose his loss to each client so they can decide whether to continue working with him
- **D.** Continue his full caseload, because maintaining routine supports his own grief recovery

9. The Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL) developed by Stamm measures which three constructs?

- **A.** Creative self, coping self, and essential self
- **B.** Intrusion, avoidance, and negative alterations in cognition
- **C.** Compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress
- **D.** Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment

10. In Ellis's ABCDE model, what does the "E" represent?

- **A.** An effective new philosophy that replaces the irrational belief
- **B.** The evaluation of the client's completed homework between sessions
- **C.** The exposure exercise assigned to test the belief
- **D.** The emotional consequence of the irrational belief

11. Elena, 45, has started anxiously asking her counselor whether she is 'doing therapy right.' She becomes tense when the counselor looks at the clock and says, 'You're probably disappointed in me, like my father always was.' What is the most appropriate psychodynamic response?

- **A.** Refer Elena to a different counselor so the transference does not interfere with treatment
- **B.** Reassure Elena that the counselor is pleased with her progress so she can relax in session
- **C.** Explore with Elena how her reactions to the counselor may mirror her relationship with her father
- **D.** Disclose the counselor's actual feelings about Elena to correct her mistaken perception

12. A 16-year-old enters a federally assisted substance use disorder program in a state where minors may legally consent to such treatment on their own. Under 42 CFR Part 2, whose consent is generally required before the program discloses the teen's treatment information to the parents?

- **A.** The program's medical director, after a chart review
- **B.** Both parents, documented in a joint written request
- **C.** Either parent, as the minor's legal guardian
- **D.** The adolescent client who consented to treatment

13. Which set of features matches the DSM-5-TR criteria for Tourette's disorder?

- **A.** Multiple motor tics and at least one vocal tic, persisting more than 1 year, with onset before 18
- **B.** Multiple motor tics and coprolalia, persisting more than 1 year, with onset before 18
- **C.** Motor or vocal tics, with no tic-free period longer than 3 consecutive months, and onset before 18
- **D.** One motor tic and one vocal tic, persisting at least 6 months, with onset before 12

14. Tasha, 40, tells her REBT counselor, "My husband must call me every day when he travels. If he doesn't, it means he doesn't care." The counselor wants to help Tasha replace this demand with a rational alternative. Which belief best fits REBT goals?

A. "Expecting daily calls is reasonable, so he should call"
B. "I strongly want him to call, but he does not have to"
C. "He calls because he loves me, so I'll stop worrying"
D. "It doesn't matter to me whether he calls or not"

15. Leo, 11, is struggling because his parents and his teacher hold conflicting expectations about homework and behavior. His school counselor arranges a joint meeting so that home and school can agree on consistent expectations. In Bronfenbrenner's terms, the counselor is intervening primarily at the level of the

A. microsystem
B. chronosystem
C. mesosystem
D. exosystem

16. In motivational interviewing, the acronym OARS refers to which set of core skills?

A. Openness, acceptance, respect, and sincerity
B. Objectives, action plans, reinforcement, and scheduling
C. Open questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries
D. Observation, advice, reassurance, and support

17. Wubbolding described one component of the WDEP system as the cornerstone of reality therapy procedures, without which change is unlikely. Which component is it?

A. The client's clear statement of wants and perceptions
B. The client's firm commitment to carrying out a specific, measurable plan of action
C. The client's self-evaluation of whether current behavior is working
D. The client's detailed description of current total behavior

18. In the United States, when suicide rates are compared by age and sex, which group has consistently had among the highest rates?

A. Adolescent girls aged 15 to 19
B. Men aged 75 and older
C. Young adult men aged 18 to 24
D. Women aged 45 to 64

19. Maribel, 42, who is Puerto Rican, describes an episode after a heated family argument in which she suddenly began shouting and crying uncontrollably, trembled, felt heat rising in her chest, and felt out of control. She recovered within an hour and says relatives have had similar episodes. Which DSM-5-TR cultural concept of distress BEST fits?

A. Ataque de nervios
B. Khyâl cap
C. Susto
D. Taijin kyofusho

20. In Krumboltz's social learning theory of career decision making, which term refers to the work habits, problem-solving and decision-making skills, emotional responses, and cognitive processes a person brings to a new task?

A. Career adaptability
B. Task approach skills
C. Self-observation generalizations
D. Outcome expectations

21. A test that is designed primarily to predict how well a person will perform in a future training program or occupation, such as the ASVAB, is best classified as which type of test?

- **A.** Personality inventory
- **B.** Interest inventory
- **C.** Achievement test
- **D.** Aptitude test

22. A psychoanalytic counselor instructs a client to report whatever comes to mind, without censoring, no matter how trivial, illogical, or embarrassing it seems. This instruction describes which technique?

- **A.** Interpretation
- **B.** Free association
- **C.** Dream analysis
- **D.** Analysis of resistance

23. Aiden, 4, entered foster care after severe neglect. He rarely seeks or responds to comfort when distressed, shows little positive affect with caregivers, and has unexplained episodes of irritability. A clinician is considering reactive attachment disorder versus autism spectrum disorder. Which finding would most support reactive attachment disorder?

- **A.** A documented history of severe neglect with no restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior
- **B.** Onset of the social difficulties before age 5
- **C.** Persistent deficits in reciprocal social interaction across home, school, and foster settings
- **D.** Delays in expressive language and cognitive development

24. After her counselor gently points out a discrepancy, Priya, 41, says, "You're right. I keep saying family comes first, but I work 70 hours a week. I see it now; I just don't know what to do about it yet." On Ivey's Client Change Scale, Priya's response is best rated at which level?

- **A.** Level 2, partial examination of the discrepancy
- **B.** Level 1, denial of the discrepancy
- **C.** Level 3, acceptance and recognition without change
- **D.** Level 4, creation of a new solution

25. Ana, 52, is in a severe major depressive episode. She hears a voice telling her she is worthless and deserves to be punished for her sins. The voice began only after her depression became severe, and in a previous episode similar voices stopped as soon as her mood improved. Which diagnosis is most accurate?

- **A.** Major depressive disorder, severe, with mood-congruent psychotic features
- **B.** Schizoaffective disorder, depressive type
- **C.** Major depressive disorder, severe, with mood-incongruent psychotic features
- **D.** Brief psychotic disorder, with marked stressors

26. Two years after Erin remarried, her 12-year-old daughter, Kayla, refuses to follow rules set by her stepfather, Mark, saying, "You're not my dad." Mark has been the main disciplinarian since the wedding. Which recommendation is best supported by stepfamily research?

- **A.** Have the family delay working on rules until Kayla is old enough to accept Mark
- **B.** Have Kayla spend less time with her biological father to reduce loyalty conflicts
- **C.** Have Erin handle discipline for now while Mark builds a warm relationship with Kayla
- **D.** Have Mark assert firmer authority so Kayla learns that he is a full parent

27. During session 7 of treatment for social anxiety, Darius, 26, discloses that he drinks heavily most nights to sleep. The treatment plan does not address substance use. What should the counselor do NEXT?

- **A.** Immediately refer Darius to a substance use program and end the anxiety work
- **B.** Assess his alcohol use in more depth and revise the treatment plan with him
- **C.** Tell Darius that anxiety treatment cannot continue until he stops drinking
- **D.** Continue the current plan, since the referral was for social anxiety

28. Maria, 33, a Latina lesbian who uses a wheelchair, tells her counselor that the discrimination she faces at work cannot be understood by looking at her ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or disability one at a time. Which concept best captures Maria's point?

A. Minority stress
B. Double consciousness
C. Tripartite model of identity
D. Intersectionality

29. Ruth, 50, has no prior history of depression. She began drinking heavily after a layoff, and over the following six weeks developed depressed mood, insomnia, poor concentration, and fatigue that met the symptom criteria for a major depressive episode. After three weeks of monitored abstinence, her symptoms have largely resolved. Which diagnosis best accounts for the depressive symptoms?

A. Adjustment disorder with depressed mood
B. Alcohol-induced depressive disorder
C. Major depressive disorder, single episode
D. Persistent depressive disorder

30. Lena, 23, has a history of childhood abuse. Her previous provider described her as "manipulative" because she tests people before trusting them. Her feminist counselor instead describes the testing as a survival strategy that once protected her in an unsafe environment. This shift is best described as:

A. externalizing the problem so the client can resist its influence
B. conducting a gender-role analysis of the messages she internalized
C. applying a strengths-based diagnosis of a personality disorder
D. relabeling a pathology label as an adaptive response to oppressive conditions

31. DeShawn, 31, has a felony conviction from eight years ago and is applying for warehouse jobs. He asks his counselor how to handle questions about his record. Which guidance is MOST appropriate?

A. Tell him that employers are generally prohibited by law from asking about criminal convictions
B. Advise him to leave the conviction off applications, since it happened long ago and he has changed
C. Help him prepare a brief, honest explanation and target fair-chance employers
D. Recommend that he apply only for jobs at employers that never run criminal background checks

32. Which of the following suicide risk factors is considered dynamic, meaning it can change and be targeted in treatment?

A. Current hopelessness
B. A history of childhood abuse
C. A family history of death by suicide
D. A history of prior suicide attempts

33. When obtaining informed consent from members of a counseling group, what must the group leader communicate about confidentiality?

A. That the importance and parameters of confidentiality apply, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed
B. That disclosures in group are not privileged, so the leader will report any member's illegal behavior
C. That confidentiality applies only to the leader, so members should share little personal information
D. That members are legally bound to keep disclosures confidential once they sign a group agreement

34. Dr. Reyes, a clinical supervisor, realizes that he and his current supervisee, Nina, are mutually attracted. Nina says she would welcome a relationship. What should Dr. Reyes do?

A. Begin the relationship, since both are consenting adults and Nina is not a client
B. Begin the relationship once Nina signs an acknowledgment of the power differential
C. Refrain from romantic involvement and seek consultation on managing it
D. Begin the relationship if a co-supervisor takes over all formal evaluations of Nina

35. The original Milan associates (Selvini Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin, and Prata) proposed which three guidelines for conducting sessions?

- **A.** Tracking, reframing, and directives
- **B.** Hypothesizing, circularity, and neutrality
- **C.** Joining, enactment, and unbalancing
- **D.** Congruence, sculpting, and reconstruction

36. Six weeks after Leo, 7, stopped throwing tantrums at the grocery store under an extinction plan, he suddenly has a tantrum during a shopping trip. His parents had not changed anything about the plan. Which behavioral phenomenon does this best illustrate?

- **A.** Stimulus generalization
- **B.** Extinction burst
- **C.** Response cost
- **D.** Spontaneous recovery

37. An elementary school counselor is planning a friendship skills group for kindergarten and first-grade students. Which structure is most developmentally appropriate?

- **A.** Two members meeting for 90 minutes to allow in-depth discussion
- **B.** About 8 members meeting for 60 minutes once a week
- **C.** About 10 members meeting for 45 minutes twice a week to build familiarity quickly
- **D.** A few members, such as 3 or 4, meeting for about 20 to 30 minutes

38. Before acting on a decision, counselor Ben asks himself, "Would I be comfortable if my handling of this situation were reported in the local newspaper?" In the Forester-Miller and Davis model, this question belongs to which test, and at which step is it applied?

- **A.** The justice test, applied when determining the nature of the dilemma
- **B.** The universality test, applied when generating potential courses of action
- **C.** The publicity test, applied when applying the ACA Code to the problem
- **D.** The publicity test, applied when evaluating the selected course of action

39. A program evaluator finds a correlation of r = .60 between participants' scores on a working alliance measure and their outcome scores. What proportion of variance in outcome scores is shared with working alliance scores?

- **A.** 77%
- **B.** 60%
- **C.** 36%
- **D.** 40%

40. Jordan, 28, has been glancing at the clock and answering in single words since his counselor asked about his drinking. Which counselor response best demonstrates immediacy?

- **A.** "We have about twenty minutes left; is there anything you'd like to make sure we cover?"
- **B.** "Since I asked about drinking, you've gone quiet; what's happening between us right now?"
- **C.** "You seem distracted today; is there something else going on for you this week?"
- **D.** "It seems like drinking is a really hard topic for you to talk about with anyone."