

Helping & Counseling Skills

Lower Level, Non-Liberal, 4 credits

Helping and Counseling Skills is considered to be lower level knowledge that is non-liberal. It represents foundational skills and concepts that an entry level human service worker has acquired. Helping and Counseling Skills is more often about how we do things (i.e., non-liberal) and not necessarily why we do things (i.e., liberal). At Empire State College and community colleges, the course in Helping and Counseling Skills is offered at the lower level.

The questions below can only be utilized for Helping and Counseling Skills at the lower level, not advanced level. If you are requesting advanced level credit for Helping and Counseling Skills, you need to demonstrate that your knowledge, skills, and application goes beyond what is described below. Remember you are being evaluated on your knowledge and skills, not about your years of experience.

Please use the questions below to structure your PLA submission on the topic of Helping and Counseling Skills. Copy each question and respond directly below it. If you utilize an outside source, such as a website or a book, make sure to reference this in your response. The responses to the questions should be submitted in a Word document and uploaded in PLA Planner. In PLA Planner, you would list the topic as Helping and Counseling Skills, asking for 4 credits, and designate this as Lower Level and Non-Liberal.

Please note – responding to these questions is not a guarantee of credit. You will still be expected to speak with an evaluator and answer any supplemental questions that they may have. The evaluator would then make a credit determination.

Questions for Students to respond to

We suggest you save this document with your name and the title of the PLA (e.g., Smith Helping and Counseling Skills PLA) and answer beneath each question below.

Name:

ID:

PLA Title: Helping and Counseling Skills

Number of Credits Requested: 4

Type: Lower level, Non-Liberal

1. Briefly describe your experiences in human services.
2. Discuss the case study below and make sure to answer **ALL** of the following questions:
 1. Explain your role in this case
 2. How would you communicate your understanding to Jon of his situation? Provide details as to how you would interact with Jon.
 3. Identify the cultural and social information in this case
 4. Articulate the ethical issues that are present
 5. How would you assess this client? Detail what types of information you would need.
 6. Identify the barriers or obstacles that you may face in this case and how you would resolve them.
 7. Identify the skills that you would utilize when working with Jon
 8. Reflect on your own personal style when working with clients and how this may affect or impact your work with Jon
 9. Identify who you would consult with on this case
 10. Identify any barriers or biases that this case may present for you as a counselor

Case Study

You are employed at a community health center as a case worker. Jon, a 40-year-old Puerto Rican American man, lives in a middle class neighborhood. He has been married for more than 15 years to his high school sweetheart, a White American woman, and they have two children. Jon owns a fleet of garbage trucks—a business started by his father-in-law that Jon has expanded considerably. Of late, Jon has been spending more time at work. He has also been drinking more than usual. As his drinking has increased, tensions between Jon and his wife have escalated. From Jon's perspective and that of some family members and friends, Jon is just a hard-working guy who deserves to have a beer as a reward for a hard day's work. Many people in his Puerto Rican American community do not consider Jon's low-level daily drinking a problem, especially because he drinks primarily at home.

Recently, Jon had an accident while working on one of his trucks. The treating physician identified alcohol abuse as one of several health problems and referred him to a substance abuse treatment center. Jon attended, but argued all the while that he was not a *borracho* (drunkard) and did not need treatment. He distrusted the counselors, stating that seeking help from professionals for a mental disorder was something that only *gabachos* (Whites) did. Jon was proud of his capacity to “hold his liquor” and felt anger and hostility toward those who encouraged him to reduce his drinking. Jon dropped out of treatment. When his wife threatened to divorce him if he did not take immediate action to deal with his drinking problem, he reluctantly enrolled in an outpatient treatment program.