

Counselors' Continuing Education: An Exploratory Assessment of Activities and Perceived Value

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Abstract:

A random sample of 597 National Certified Counselors was surveyed to assess counselors' continuing education activities. Recent and intended future choices of delivery methods, motivation for choosing activities, and value ratings of recent activities are described.

Keywords: continuing education | National Certified Counselors

Article:

*****Note: Full text of article below**

Counselors' Continuing Education: An Exploratory Assessment of Activities and Perceived Value

S. Christian Smith, PhD & James M. Benshoff, PhD

A random sample of 597 National Certified Counselors was surveyed to assess counselors' continuing education activities. Recent and intended future choices of delivery methods, motivation for choosing activities, and value ratings of recent activities are described.

This article describes methodology and results of a national study of participation in continuing education by National Certified Counselors (NCCs). In addition, it presents an overview of the existing literature on continuing education and discusses the implications of findings for continuing education providers, counselors, counselor educators, and credentialing organizations (such as NBCC and state counselor licensure boards). This study is the first one to examine counselors' preferences for types of continuing education experiences and for delivery methods (e.g., online, workshops).

Participation in continuing education has grown substantially in the last three decades. Approximately 90 million Americans annually complete some form of professional learning to increase their professional knowledge, skills, and abilities (Kim & Creighton, 1999). This trend is also reflected in the counseling profession. Professional counselors are required to pursue continuing education activities by their membership organizations, licensure boards, and voluntary certification boards. The American Counseling Association (ACA) and its divisions encourage counselors to seek continuing education. Moreover, the importance of continued professional learning is reflected in professional ethical standards (e.g., American

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Counseling Association, 1995) that require professional counselors to upgrade their knowledge, skills, and abilities through ongoing learning. As key gatekeepers of the profession, counselor educators are in a unique position to influence the quality and direction of continuing education by emphasizing for new professionals the importance of continual learning. As leaders in the profession, counseling faculty influence the continuing education requirements of associations, certification boards, and licensure boards. Finally, as a primary source of continuing education activities, counselor educators have direct control of the quality of programs they offer.

State licensure laws also typically require continuing education. Because the goal of counseling licensure laws is to protect the public, requiring continuing education helps assure that counselors' professional knowledge is current, allowing them to offer services consistent with the latest clinical, legal, and ethical standards. ACA endorsed and published a model licensure law in 1995 (Glosoff, Benschhoff, Hosie, & Maki, 1995) that recognized the need for continuing education requirements to ensure ongoing quality of services by licensed professional counselors. This model legislation further required regular, documented continuing education as a requirement for licensure renewal. Authors of this model legislation also recommended that state licensure boards adopt the ACA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, which state that counselors have ethical obligations to continually upgrade and maintain their knowledge and abilities. By requiring licensees to upgrade their knowledge, skills, and abilities on an ongoing basis, states help assure that counselors are providing an acceptable level of service to the public (Kim & Creighton, 1999; Levy, 1990).

The National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), which certifies professional counselors in the United States and internationally, requires 100 hours of continuing education every five years for National Certified Counselors (NCCs) (Leary, 2000; NBCC, 1997). NBCC has developed an approval process for continuing education providers who offer training to counselors. This comprehensive approval process entails submission of a written application and fee, samples of previous continuing education offerings, plans for future offerings, qualifications of activity leaders, and a renewal process.

It is clear, then, that the master's degree is only the beginning of the education process for counselors (Levy, 1990).

Once a counselor graduates, he or she has a lifetime of continuing education ahead. NCCs must document an average of 20 hours of annual continuing education. Since there are almost 43,000 NCCs at present (NBCC, n.d.a), this means that NCCs alone must spend close to 860,000 hours annually in continuing education activities. If each of the more than 100,000 clinically trained counselors in the United States (Peterson, West, Tanielian, Pincus, Kohout, Pion et al., 2001) completed 20 hours of continuing education annually, over two million hours would be spent in (and on) continuing education by these professionals each year. Given this, it is reasonable to assume that counselors spend millions of dollars annually on continuing education activities. As mental health needs of our society are increasingly recognized and addressed, continuing education is a critical professional obligation to help assure that counselors are prepared to meet these evolving needs (Kim & Creighton, 1999; Levy, 1990).

Continuing education for professionals continues to change both in content and in delivery format. Continuing education activities are one important way that counselors access new information to help them develop new knowledge and skills (Kim & Creighton, 1999; Knox, 2003; Rubel, Sobell, & Miller, 2000) and meet the changing needs of their clients. One example of these changes is the growth in the number of older Americans and the resulting need for counselors with gerontology training (Lehrmann & Shreve, 1996). Catastrophic events, such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and Hurricane Katrina, directly or indirectly affect thousands of people. Following these two events, there was a noticeable increase in the number of continuing education offerings on grief, trauma, and crisis response throughout the helping professions.

Another area that is changing in continuing education is the medium of delivery. NBCC categorizes continuing education activities into different types: college or university course; seminar, workshop, or conference; publication, presentation, or new program development; supervision or consultation; dissertation; leadership; and home study (NBCC, n.d.b). Counselors typically take advantage of a variety of these continuing education activities. In recent years, there seems to have been an increase in nontraditional methods of continuing education delivery, as opposed to such traditional forms of continuing education delivery as professional conferences and seminars

(Leary, 2000). These nontraditional delivery methods include print-based and online home study offerings. Anecdotal evidence suggests that nontraditional forms of continuing education, which often are more convenient and may require less investment of time and money, are gaining market share over traditional forms, particularly with young professionals (Spivey, 2005).

Although the goals of continuing education vary, a common theme is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of practitioners (American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, 2001; American Counseling Association, 1995; American Counseling Association Practice Research Network, 2001; American Mental Health Counselors Association, 2000; American Psychological Association, 2002; American School Counselor Association, 1998; Aparicio & Willis, 2005; Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, 1993; Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification, 2000; Council on the Continuing Education Unit, 1984; International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors, 1998; Levy, 1990; National Commission for Certifying Agencies, 2000). To achieve these goals, continuing education activities must be designed intentionally for adult learners (Creighton, Shafer, & Blaney, 1999). Kirshstein (1996) stated that optimal adult learning requires mutual respect between students and instructors, integration of previous knowledge and experience of adult students, input from adult students when choosing class materials and structure, interaction among students as well as discussion between the instructor and students, the instructor's ability to lead and assist adults in learning, and, finally, a learning environment that recognizes the importance of other life tasks and demands. Because counselors are adult learners, these learning factors are important to consider when assessing the quality of the continuing education learning process.

The purpose of the present study was to explore further the issue of continuing education delivery format and to identify factors contributing to counselors' choices of delivery format. In addition, this study assessed the value counselors assign to the various types of continuing education activities and delivery methods. Results of the study can inform continuing education providers, boards requiring continuing education, and counselor educators. Methodology for this study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the university with which the authors were affiliated at the time of the study.

Method

Participants

The 596 participants were a sample of National Certified Counselors (NCCs) whose certification was current at the time of the survey and whose names were randomly generated by NBCC from its database of NCC certificants. According to Loesch and Vacc (1993), limiting the subject pool to NCCs is appropriate given that the NCC population represents a broad spectrum of persons who identify themselves as counselors. Participants received a postcard informing them about the study, followed by the survey packet with a postage-paid return envelope. One week later, a reminder letter was sent to all participants whose surveys had not been received; a reminder e-mail was also sent to all participants (with a valid e-mail address) whose surveys had not been received. These procedures resulted in 359 completed surveys, for a return rate of 60.2%. The majority of respondents were women (76.3%, $n = 274$). Most indicated that their highest counseling-related degree was a master's (78.6%, $n = 276$), while 12.3% ($n = 43$) held doctorates and 9.1% ($n = 32$) held educational specialist degrees. The overwhelming majority of respondents were white (87.7%, $n = 315$). Clinical work was the most common job responsibility (46.5%, $n = 167$), while 23.7% ($n = 85$) of respondents indicated that education was their primary responsibility.

Instrumentation

For purposes of this study, an instrument was created to measure the desired variables (see Appendix A). This instrument was developed based on related studies, relevant literature, and continuing education materials published by NBCC. A cover letter outlined the protocol and instructions of the study. Participants were then asked to respond to demographic questions and to several questions about factors that were important to them when choosing continuing education activities. Participants also responded to several items concerning their past and intended future choices in continuing education activities. Response choices to these questions were based largely on NBCC's recertification standards, since respondents were current certificants of NBCC and therefore required to document their continuing education activities in this format.

Finally, participants were asked to provide detailed information about two continuing education activities they had completed within the 12 months prior to receiving the survey. The first question for each activity asked participants to indicate the type of continuing education activity. They were then asked to rate the extent to which the activity was consistent with factors that contribute to a successful adult learning event. These questions were largely based on adult learning theory and factors that have been identified as important to a successful adult learning event (Kirshstein, 1996), including participants' opportunities to use previous knowledge and experiences; provide input into structure and learning materials used; participate meaningfully with the instructor and other participants, and have individualized instruction outside of normal scheduled activity times. A subsequent question assessed the perceived value of the activity in terms of developing counseling-related knowledge and skills, as well as personal interest or enjoyment. Participants were then asked whether they would recommend this activity to others, a commonly used measure of customer satisfaction. Finally, participants were asked how the activity might have been improved.

Results

When asked to identify important factors when choosing continuing education activities, counselors indicated a variety of factors. Most often selected factors were cost ($n = 305$; 86.9%), practical content ($n = 286$; 81.5%), and distance to activity ($n = 275$; 78.3%). Factors chosen least often were desirability of activity location ($n = 112$; 31.9%) and opportunity for interaction with other professionals ($n = 124$; 35.3%). When asked to identify the single most important factor when choosing continuing education activities, participants most frequently selected practical content ($n = 115$; 37.7%), cost ($n = 65$; 21.3%), and preapproval of activity by a certification or licensure board ($n = 42$; 13.8%). Factors chosen least often were opportunity for interaction with other professionals ($n = 2$; 0.7%) and desirability of activity location ($n = 3$; 1%). These results suggest that counselors tend to seek out continuing education experiences with practical content that are also convenient in terms of schedule and location.

When participants were asked to identify their continuing education activities during the previous 12 months, the most

common activities reported were attending seminars, workshops, and conferences ($n = 318$; 90.6%), receiving counseling-related supervision or consultation ($n = 116$; 33%), and giving professional presentations ($n = 111$; 31.6%). Seminars, workshops, and conferences were by far the most commonly chosen activities. The least common continuing education activity was completing dissertation work ($n = 3$; 0.9%). Participants were also asked to identify the delivery formats they participated in most often. Attending seminars, workshops, or conferences was by far the most frequent choice ($n = 198$; 63.5%), while completing dissertation work was not chosen by any participants ($n = 0$; 0%).

Participants were also asked about continuing education activities in which they intended to participate during the 12 months following completion of the survey. Attending seminars, workshops, or conferences was selected by more than nine out of 10 participants ($n = 334$; 95.7%), while the least chosen activity continued to be completing dissertation work ($n = 6$; 1.7%). In addition to identifying types of activities in which they intended to participate, participants were asked to identify the intended format for these learning experiences. Once again, attending seminars, workshops, or conferences was the most common choice ($n = 214$; 69.7%). Holding leadership positions ($n = 3$; 1%), completing dissertation work ($n = 3$; 1%), developing new counseling related courses, seminars, workshops, or community programs ($n = 3$; 1%), authoring publications ($n = 4$; 1.3%), giving professional presentations ($n = 5$; 1.6%), and other ($n = 1$; 0.3%) were selected by a surprisingly small number of respondents. These findings are similar to those regarding activities used in the previous 12 months, suggesting that counselors' choices in continuing education activities are not likely to change dramatically in the near future.

Almost two-thirds of participants ($n = 216$; 63.9%) indicated that they received financial support and/or time off for continuing education activities from their employer. This finding is important because of the relatively high number of hours counselors must dedicate to continuing education and the typically modest salaries counselors earn. Participants also were asked how many credentials they held that required continuing education hours. Because all participants were NCCs, they were known to hold at least one such credential. The modal response was two professional credentials ($n = 142$;

44.9%), with nearly 98% indicating that they had four or fewer professional credentials ($n = 309$; 97.8%).

Although another purpose of the present study was to assess counselors' use of online continuing education activities, the number of participants indicating past or intended future use of online activities was relatively small. However, the number of individuals intending to engage in online learning in the future 12 months ($n = 86$; 24.6%) was nearly twice as large as the number who had used them in the last 12 months ($n = 45$; 12.8%). These results suggest that the vast majority of counselors have little experience with online continuing education and do not anticipate participating in such activities in the near future. However, given the anticipated growth rate to nearly one-fourth of counselors using online activities in the next 12 months, online activities still could constitute a significant portion of continuing education in the next 3–5 years.

In anticipation of the relatively low use of online activities, respondents who had not participated in online activities were asked to indicate the factors that had deterred them. Preference for other forms of continuing education was the most common reason chosen ($n = 142$; 54.8%), with slightly over half of respondents selecting it. Concerns about online privacy ($n = 22$; 8.5%) and security ($n = 28$; 10.8%) were the least common choices. Thus, although most respondents did not indicate concerns with privacy and security issues online, they still preferred face-to-face forms of continuing education, including attending seminars, workshops, and conferences. One possible explanation for these results is that counselors who are satisfied with the availability and quality of traditional forms of continuing education may have little motivation or need to seek out online options.

Participants were asked to respond to a series of questions about recent interactive continuing education activities. In addition to indicating type of activity, they were asked to rate each activity on five factors common to successful adult learning events and on four measures of satisfaction. Regarding the adult learning factors, respondents rated the majority of activities highly on using previous knowledge and/or experiences, on having meaningful interactions with the instructor during the course of instruction, and on having meaningful interactions with other participants. These responses may be due in part to the fact that most of the activities were traditional continuing education experiences such as conferences

and workshops. *Took a college or university course and received supervision or consultation* were rated highly in all areas of adult learning theory. These activities were rated lower by most respondents on ability to provide input into structure and choice of learning materials used and on having individualized instruction outside of normal scheduled activity times. These lower ratings are to be expected given the nature of continuing education activities. Continuing education providers typically put together a program and then advertise it to counselors, allowing counselors to select options that meet their interests. Therefore, although providing input into the structure and learning materials used might make for a more effective adult learning event, it may not be feasible given the nature of many continuing education experiences. Similarly, most continuing education activities have specific beginning and ending times; participants pay for the content included in that timeframe, with little to no opportunity for additional individualized instruction.

To assess participants' satisfaction with past continuing education activities, they were asked to rate activities on providing professionally useful knowledge about specific topics, acquisition of new counseling skills, and personal interest or enjoyment. The majority of activities were rated highly in all three of these areas, with acquisition of new counseling skills rated lowest of the three. Additionally, when respondents were asked if they would recommend the activity to others, they indicated that they would recommend more than 9 out of 10 activities. These findings indicate that counselors generally report being satisfied with the vast majority of their continuing education experiences. Continuing education providers, however, may want to consider increasing emphasis on development of new counseling skills through these activities. This is an important finding since most counselors are required to participate in such activities.

Post-hoc analyses were performed to determine which factors were related to past and intended future choices in continuing education activities. A positive relationship was found between the activity used most often in the previous 12 months and the activity intended to be used most often in the next 12 months. In other words, counselors' choices in continuing education activities seem unlikely to change significantly in the near future. This again supports the conclusion that seminars, workshops, and conferences will likely con-

tinue to dominate counselors' continuing education activities, at least in the short term. From an educational perspective this is acceptable, since the vast majority of seminars, workshops, and conferences are rated highly. However, as technology becomes more common in counselor education and in the workplace, counselors' use of online activities should also be expected to increase.

Finally, post hoc analyses were performed to determine if there was a relationship between activity type and five factors common to successful adult learning events. Positive relationships were found between the type of activity selected and the following adult learning factors as rated by participants: the extent to which they felt able to provide input into the structure of the educational experience and learning materials used; meaningful interactions with the instructor during the course of instruction; individualized instruction outside of normal scheduled activity times; and, meaningful interactions with other participants. This finding, combined with those previously discussed, is encouraging, since it supports the value of the vast majority of continuing education activities as adult learning events.

Discussion

Several important conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study. The most important motivating factors for counselors in selecting continuing education activities seem to be practical content, cost, preapproval by a certification or licensure board, and distance to the activity. These results are logical given that the majority of counselors' primary job responsibilities are clinical. Clinical counselors need affordable practical information and training that will contribute to their effectiveness with clients. Activities requiring travel also involve higher expenses as well as time away from their clients, decreased billable hours, or time off from an employer. Fortunately, the majority of counselors receive some type of employer support for continuing education.

Findings about counselors' preferences for the format of continuing education activities were clear and somewhat surprising. Participants in this study still seemed to overwhelmingly prefer seminars, workshops, and conferences to other forms of continuing education. Most respondents had chosen

seminars, workshops, and conferences in the past, and intended to choose these formats again in the future. This likely indicates that the current supply of continuing education topics and formats meets the needs of counselors. In other words, the traditional forms of continuing education that dominate the current marketplace do so because they meet the educational, professional, and social needs of counselors. Results of this study also indicated that, although the use of online formats is currently fairly low overall, counselors' use of online continuing education likely will increase in the short term. Although the primary reason given for not using online activities was preference for other forms of continuing education, this preference will likely change as the number of available online activities grows and as counselors become more accustomed to the format of online learning.

One interesting finding of this study was that although counselors seemed quite satisfied with the quality and adult-learning approaches of their past continuing education experiences, they have little opportunity to provide input into the structure of the activity or to have any individualized instruction. Based on these findings, it appears that continuing education providers could further enhance their programs by creating ways to incorporate more participant input and individualized instruction into these professional learning experiences. By communicating with participants before the event takes place, presenters could tailor the learning experience to the specific needs of the group. In addition, follow-up with individual participants would further the learning opportunities of the continuing education experience.

Two limitations to the present study should be noted. First, all data was self-report, and as such is subject to the constraints of this survey method. Second, satisfaction ratings and ratings related to adult learning cannot necessarily be assumed to correlate with learning levels.

Implications and Recommendations

Results of this survey indicate that the market for traditional face-to-face seminars and conferences will likely remain very strong for at least the near future. The importance of distance and cost to respondents suggests that providers should continue offering local and regional programs at reasonable costs.

In addition, providers should make practical content their top priority, as this is the single most important factor cited by counselors. Perhaps the challenge is for providers to offer the right mix of theoretical and practical, skills-based information in each of their continuing education offerings.

Certification and licensure boards can use this information as they consider updating their continuing education standards. Although the use of online continuing education activities remains low, it appears that the use of such activities could grow substantially in the future. The percentage of respondents who indicated that they intended to use online continuing education activities in the next 12 months ($n = 86$; 24.6%) is nearly double the percentage that said they had in the previous 12 months ($n = 45$; 12.8%). This pattern, coupled with the growth of online counseling and supervision, makes counselors' ongoing technical training a more important issue for certification and licensure boards. To protect the public, these boards must strive to assure counselors' competence in using these new technologies. In addition, the majority of counselors considered board preapproval of an activity an important factor in selecting continuing education options. This demand offers certification and licensure boards an opportunity to endorse the value of their provider-approval processes and to affect positively the quality of their certificants' continuing education activities.

Several outcomes of the present study have implications for counselor educators. The growing use of online continuing education activities is one more example of the importance of technical training. By incorporating technology into their counselor training programs, counselor educators can help assure that future counselors are prepared for the increasingly technical workplace and make them more comfortable with online continuing education. Future studies addressing how well training programs prepare counselors to be lifelong learners may be valuable (Shumway, 2004). Additionally, results of this study may provide a valuable starting point for counselor education programs as they consider types of continuing education activities and delivery options they might offer. Future research also might further explore barriers to these opportunities.

Research that examined reasons for counselors' overwhelmingly positive recommendations of continuing education activities also would be beneficial. For example, counselors may

recommend activities they enjoyed even if those activities did not lead to knowledge or skill development. Conversely, research may show that counselors learn the most from activities they enjoy the least and as such do not recommend them to other counselors. This additional detail would allow for more useful interpretation of satisfaction data. Although results of the present study indicate that counselors would recommend over 90% of continuing education activities to their colleagues, the reasons behind these recommendations were not assessed in this study. This additional information would contribute to a deeper understanding of counselors' reactions to different delivery methods and content areas. Finally, measuring actual changes in counselors' practice following continuing education would have provided valuable information to the present study. Improved practice is the ultimate goal of continuing education and future studies measuring such changes will greatly contribute to the literature.

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Appendix A Section I

1. What is your primary job responsibility? (check one)

- Administration Education
 Clinical Supervision
 Consultation Other: please specify _____

2. What is your most advanced counseling-related degree? (check one)

- Master's Educational Specialist
 Doctorate

3. Select the factors that are important to you when choosing a continuing education activity.

Important Factors	Most Important Factor	Factors
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Length of activity Cost of activity Distance to activity Desirability of activity location Number of continuing education hours available Preapproval of activity by certification or licensure board Theoretical content of activity topic Practical content of activity topic Presenter, teacher, or author of activity Opportunity for interaction with other professionals Availability of activity when you need it
(check all that apply)	(check only one)	

4. For the period of the previous 12 months, including this month, select the categories that best describe your continuing education activities.

<u>Activities Used</u>	<u>Activity Used Most Often</u>	<u>Activities</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taken college or university courses
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended seminars, workshops, or conferences
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Authored publications (e.g., article in a refereed journal, chapter in an edited book, published book)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Given professional presentations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Developed new counseling-related courses, seminars, workshops, or community programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Received counseling-related supervision or consultation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed dissertation work
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Held leadership positions (e.g., association officer, journal editor)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed print based home study activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed online activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify: _____

5. For the period of the next 12 months, not including this month, select the categories that best describe your intended continuing education activities.

<u>Activities Intend to Use</u>	<u>Activity Intend to Use Most Often</u>	<u>Activities</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taken college or university courses
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attended seminars, workshops, or conferences
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Authored publications (e.g., article in a refereed journal, chapter in an edited book, published book)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Given professional presentations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Developed new counseling-related courses, seminars, workshops, or community programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Received counseling-related supervision or consultation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed dissertation work
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Held leadership positions (e.g., association officer, journal editor)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed print based home study activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed online activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify: _____

6. If you have completed online continuing education activities in the past, please skip this question and go to question 7. If you have not, please indicate the factors that have deterred you from completing online continuing education activities. (check all that apply)

- Concerns about online security
- Concerns about online privacy
- Limited internet access
- Cost of activity
- Concerns about certification or licensure board approval of activity
- Lack of interesting topics
- Prefer other forms of continuing education activities
- Other, please specify: _____

7. How many counseling-related credentials do you hold that require continuing education hours? _____

8. Does your employer provide financial support and/or time-off for continuing education activities?

- no yes

9. Are you currently enrolled in a graduate degree program?

- no yes

Section II

Continuing Education Activity #1

Please answer the following questions about the last interactive counseling-related continuing education activity you completed.

1. Type of activity (check one):

- Took a college or university course (face-to-face)
- Attended a seminar or workshop
- Attended a conference
- Received supervision or consultation
- Completed print-based home-study activities
- Participated in online activities (e.g., online course, workshop, etc.)
- Other, please specify: _____

2. To what extent did this activity allow you to (circle your rating for each item):

	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Great Deal</u>
a. Use your previous knowledge and/or experiences	1	2	3	4
b. Provide input into the structure and learning materials used	1	2	3	4
c. Have meaningful interactions with the instructor during the course of instruction	1	2	3	4
d. Have individualized instruction outside of normal scheduled activity times (e.g., tutorials, one-on-one sessions with the instructor)	1	2	3	4
e. Have meaningful interactions with other participants	1	2	3	4

3. Rate the value of this activity in terms of the following (circle your rating for each item):

	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Great Deal</u>
a. Providing professionally useful knowledge about specific topics (e.g., new regulations or policies)	1	2	3	4
b. Acquiring new counseling-related skills	1	2	3	4
c. Personal interest or enjoyment	1	2	3	4

4. Would you recommend this activity to others?

- no yes

5. How might this activity have been improved?

Continuing Education Activity #2

Please think about a second interactive counseling-related continuing education activity you have completed and answer the following questions.

1. Type of activity (check one):

- Took a college or university course (face-to-face)
- Attended a seminar or workshop
- Attended a conference
- Received supervision or consultation
- Completed print-based home-study activities
- Participated in online activities (e.g., online course, workshop, etc.)
- Other, please specify: _____

2. To what extent did this activity allow you to (circle your rating for each item):

	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Great Deal</u>
a. Use your previous knowledge and/or experiences	1	2	3	4
b. Provide input into the structure and learning materials used	1	2	3	4
c. Have meaningful interactions with the instructor during the course of instruction	1	2	3	4
d. Have individualized instruction outside of normal scheduled activity times (e.g., tutorials, one-on-one sessions with the instructor)	1	2	3	4
e. Have meaningful interactions with other participants	1	2	3	4

3. Rate the value of this activity in terms of the following (circle your rating for each item):

	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Great Deal</u>
a. Providing professionally useful knowledge about specific topics (e.g., new regulations or policies)	1	2	3	4
b. Acquiring new counseling-related skills	1	2	3	4
c. Personal interest or enjoyment	1	2	3	4

4. Would you recommend this activity to others?

no yes

5. How might this activity have been improved? _____

Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your assistance