

# Client Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities

You may ask a career professional for a detailed explanation of services including the fees they charge. You should work with a professional who will permit you to select which services to use. You may also ask for their credentials (including a copy of their diploma and licensure certificate) and a copy of their ethical guidelines. Professional counselors are required to follow the ethical standards of professional bodies such as the National Board for Certified Counselors, the American Counseling Association, the American Psychological Association or the National Career Development Association. You may terminate services at any time and pay only for the services rendered.

You may discuss in advance with a career professional what outcomes you can expect as a result of your work together. Career counseling requires the expertise of a trained professional. Be skeptical of those who promise you more money, quick promotions, speedy or guaranteed results or an immediate solution to career problems. Career counseling issues are usually complex and require the use of many types of tools and exercises, which are best implemented by those who have extensive education, training and experience in that field.

The National Board of Certified Counselors and Chi Sigma Iota, an honorary counseling social fraternity, have published the following statements:

## Your Rights as a Consumer

- Be informed of the qualifications of your counselor: education, experience, professional counseling certifications, and license(s).
- Receive an explanation of services offered, your time commitments, fee scales, and billing policies prior to receipt of services.
- Be informed of the limitations of the counselor's practice to special areas of expertise (career development, ethnic groups, etc) or age group (adolescents, older adults, etc.).
- Have all that you say treated confidentially and be informed of any state laws placing limitations on confidentiality in the counseling relationship.
- Ask questions about the counseling techniques and strategies and be informed of your progress.
- Participate in setting goals and evaluating progress toward meeting them.
- Be informed of how to contact the counselor in an emergency situation.
- Request referral for a second opinion at any time.
- Request copies of records and reports to be used by other counseling professionals.
- Receive a copy of the code of ethics to which your counselor adheres.
- Contact the appropriate professional organization if you have doubts or complaints relative to the counselor's conduct.
- Terminate the relationship at any time.

## Your Responsibilities as a Client

- Set and keep appointments with your counselor. Let him or her know as soon as possible if you cannot keep an appointment.
- Pay your fees in accordance with the schedule you pre-established with the counselor.
- Help plan your goals.
- Follow through with agreed upon goals.
- Keep your counselor informed of your progress towards meeting your goals.
- Terminate your counseling relationship before entering into arrangements with another counselor.

## If you are dissatisfied with the Services of a Counselor

Remember that a counselor who meets the needs of one person may be wrong for another. If you are dissatisfied with the services of your counselor:

- Express your concern directly to the counselor, if possible.
- Seek the advice of the counselor's supervisor if the counselor is practicing in a setting where he or she receives direct supervision.
- Terminate the counseling relationship, if the situation remains unresolved.
- Contact the appropriate state licensing board, national certification organization, or professional association, if you believe the counselor's conduct to be unethical.