Deprofessionalization in the Age of WIOA

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The Changing Landscape

• Recognition of the need for changes in the profession rehabilitation counseling practice started in 1980s
  • Hawley & Capshaw (1981): “Today, deprofessionalization appears to be gaining momentum throughout the world of work; particularly in the human services.”
  • Jenkins & Strauser (1999): Call for the need for rehabilitation counselors to horizontally expand their interaction with businesses and organizations:
    • Paradigm shift in the Labor Market
    • Connecting with Employers - Demand Side - Potential non disability related areas of practice.
  • Friedman (2005): The World is Flat & Knoke (1996): Placeless Society
The Changing Landscape

• McMahon (2009): Advances in medicine and technology, global conflicts, economics and healthcare consequences will insure the proliferation of disability and by extension the need for rehabilitation counselors.
  • Narrow our focus and appreciate our unique strengths as the demand for our professional services will be substantial for years to come.
  • Per McMahon: The profession has been distracted by reacting directly or indirectly and in doing so we have become weaker.
  • Additionally, McMahon states our small profession has been diluted by such issues (albeit legitimate) that are actually proper purviews of human service professions.
## The Changing Landscape

### Disability Needs That Can Be Addressed With Improved Accessibility by Other Professions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimate Need</th>
<th>Alternative Service Providers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent living</td>
<td>Social workers, advocates, gerontologists, occupational therapists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistive technology &amp; accessible information</td>
<td>Ergonomists, rehabilitation engineers, assistive technology, OTs and IT technologists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aging with a disability</td>
<td>Gerontologists, social workers, occupational therapists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychotherapy</td>
<td>Psychologists, clinical social workers, mental health counselors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Addictions</td>
<td>Psychologists, substance abuse counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation facility</td>
<td>Health care administrators,</td>
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<tr>
<td>administration</td>
<td>public administrators</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

McMahon (2009)
• Emener & Cottone (1989) describe reprofessionalization as the process by which an emerging profession regains momentum in its professional development.
  • To be reprofessionalized there must be evidence that the occupation once met or began to meet criteria for the status of a profession.
  • Of course, rehabilitation counseling is clearly a profession.
  • The use of reprofessionalization in this presentation reflects an effort to regain momentum in professional development.
Professionalism

What Makes A Profession
Profession has multiple interpretations,

The common meaning of profession is “a paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification.”

The following characteristics apply:

• Passing a knowledge and/or performance test,
• Superior completion of study of intellectual basis of the profession,
• A sustained period of mentored experience/apprenticeship,
• Continuing education,
• Licensing by a formal authority, and
• Ethical standards of behavior with enforcement, including removal from profession.
Professionalization:
Evolving from an occupation into a profession.

- Mastery of and sharing common knowledge, skills, and values.
- Obtaining an elevated status in society, set apart from other occupations (CRC/LPC)
- Claim the right to structure and regulate the education and credentialing systems that entitle members to practice.
- A ‘Core’ description of the characteristics of those individuals who are practitioners in the profession.
- The right of autonomy at work and the collective right to exert exclusive authority over members’ professional integrity (the right of peer review)
- Development of an Ethical Code.
Who is responsible for a profession

Bottom Up:
• Driven by those in the occupation.

Top-Down:
• Driven by employers or the government (as an employer or as a policy maker), or some combination of the two.
Goals of a Profession or for Professionalization

1. To establish standards that enhance the quality of the workforce;
2. To regulate workers whose jobs can affect the health, safety, or property of others;
3. To enhance public trust and confidence;
4. To enable compliance with regulatory or legal requirements;
5. To enhance the status of an occupation;
6. To establish a monopoly or otherwise regulate the supply of labor to advance the interests of its members;
7. To guide the behavior of practitioners in the field, especially when it comes to morally or ethically ambiguous activities; or
8. To establish and standardize roles (and the associated knowledge, skills, and abilities) and pathways so as to better align supply and demand, increase awareness of career paths, and facilitate recruitment and retention by employers.
Factors Contributing to Professions Status

• *Quality versus quantity.*

Improvements in quality (quality of service provision) that can be shown to result from professionalization

Weighed against:

Supply restrictions that the resulting additional barriers to entry would create.

(Professionalization can be both a funnel (restricting people from entering the field) and a magnet (attracting people to the field)).
Factors Contributing to Professions Status cont.

- Standardization versus dynamism.

The value of standardization:
- Development of common curricula or certifications

Weighed against:

The time it takes to reach consensus on standards of practice and restriction of service providers

(Can the benefits of standardization impact the risks of obsolescence. Does the knowledge or skill set become out-of-date or non recognized/valued.)
Factors Contributing to Professions Status cont.

• **Broad versus niche needs.**

Given the great diversity of roles, responsibilities, and contexts, the fact that professionalization measures (e.g., certification and licensure) may be warranted in a particular subfield and context (e.g., Insurance and Private Practice) should not be confused with a broad need for professionalization.
Factors Contributing to Professions Status cont.

- Better information for employers versus false certainty.

Educational degrees, Certificates and licensure provide some ability to vet job candidates, but overreliance on them may screen out some of the most talented and suitable individuals.

- How do we weigh or balance this need?
Factors Contributing to Professions Status cont.

- Certainty about worker capabilities versus uncertainty about actual job requirements.

Increased certainty about the capabilities of a professional that may result from professionalization should be weighed against the uncertainty about what skills, knowledge, or abilities are actually needed in a particular role and uncertainty about how roles may change with diminished core training.
WIOA’s §361.18 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.

• See Attachment
Professional Associations

- National Board for Certified Counselors
- NBCC Code of Ethics
- National Association of Social Workers
- NASW Code of Ethics
- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
- AAMFT Code of Ethics
- American Mental Health Counselors Association
- Code of Ethics for Mental Health Counselors
- Association for Specialists in Group Work
- Ethical Guidelines for Group Counselors
- American Psychological Association
- Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct
- American Counseling Association
- Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
- American School Counselors Association
- Ethical Standards for School Counselors
- International Association of Marriage and Family Counselors
- Ethical Code of the International Association for Marriage and Family Counselors
- Association for Counselor Education and Supervision
- Ethical Guidelines for Counseling Supervisors
- National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors
- NAADAC Code of Ethics
- National Rehabilitation Association
- Rehabilitation Counseling Code of Ethics
- National Organization for Human Services Council for Standards in Human Service Education
- Ethics of Human Services
Michigan Rehabilitation Association (MRA) Membership Survey Results

• Survey was sent out to those in the field of disability in Michigan to see what their thoughts and concerns were.

• Primary reason to maintain MRA membership
  Professional affiliation
  Opportunities to serve on a professional board
Michigan Rehabilitation Association (MRA) Membership Survey Results

- What would you like to see MRA do over the next two years?
  - Solidify the professional status of the field
  - Stay relevant to younger groups

- Of the four choices, increase membership was last.
  - Membership continues to drop.
Michigan Rehabilitation Association (MRA) Membership Survey Results

• What advocacy issues do you think that MRA should focus on?

• The number one thing listed was to prevent the downgrading of rehabilitation professionals with State employers and licensing boards.
WIOA Mandates: New Areas of Knowledge & Practice

• Pre-ETS/Prior to Application (PTA):
  • Challenges RCs in the state-federal VR system to provide services outside the traditional VR process.
  • Law (2002) states that current rehabilitation interventions are not empirically supported, but are primarily based on experience, eminence based or habit based.
  • What knowledge & skills will be necessary to provide these services?

• Advancement
  • Challenges RCs in state VR to change thinking regarding training.
  • How will state VR address funding issues?
WIOA Mandates: New Areas of Knowledge & Practice

• STEM Careers:
  • Building on the concept of advancement and the provision of:
    • PRE-ETS/PTA: Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education.
    • Hershenson (2010): Career counseling as helping clients develop their information seeking, information-processing & decision-making skills, and apply these skills to resolving career issues.

• Customized Employment
  • Must be competitive, integrated employment in the community.
  • This is now an allowable employment outcome in state VR.
Where Do We Go From Here?

• Why did you enter the profession?
References


