

**California Association for  
Alcohol and Drug Educators  
(CAADE)**

**Candidate Information Booklet  
for the  
*Certified Addictions Treatment Counselor*  
Examination**

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## **Introduction:**

The *Certified Addictions Treatment Counselor* examination is a 100 item, multiple-choice test that assesses an individual's competence in the major responsibilities of the Addictions Treatment Counselor's job role. The purpose of this Candidate Information Booklet is to provide you with guidance for the *Certified Addictions Treatment Counselor* examination process. This booklet includes:

- ✓ background information on the examination development process,
- ✓ the examination blueprint,
- ✓ practice questions,
- ✓ examination administration procedures, and
- ✓ tips for taking multiple-choice examinations.

## **Examination Development:**

The California Association for Alcohol and Drug Educators (CAADE) contracted with Comprehensive Examination Services (CES) to develop, score and administer the *Certified Addictions Treatment Counselor* examination. CES specializes in the development of written exams for the purposes of ensuring professional workforces are competency-tested and certified. The expert staff at CES follows an examination development process that is designed to ensure that all resulting examinations are reliable and valid ... that is, our tests measure what they are designed to measure.

Perhaps the most important issue in test development is ensuring that the test measures what it is intended to measure. CES conducted a Role Delineation Study (RDS) to identify the performance domains, tasks, knowledge and skills

that are essential to performing the job of an Associate Addictions Professional. After the RDS was complete, CES conducted a validation survey, established an examination blueprint, developed test questions and created the *Certified Addictions Treatment Counselor* examination form(s).

The *Certified Addictions Treatment Counselor* examination is the first examination that reflects the model established by the *Addictions Counseling Competencies: The Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes of Professional Practice, Technical Assistance Publication (TAP) Series 21*, commonly known as TAP 21. The TAP 21 defines the following eight practice dimensions:

1. Clinical Evaluation
2. Treatment Planning
3. Referral
4. Service Coordination
5. Counseling
6. Client, Family, and Community Education
7. Documentation
8. Professional and Ethical Responsibilities

The domains for the *Certified Addictions Treatment Counselor* examination include seven of the eight TAP 21 practice dimensions:

- Domain 1: Clinical Evaluation – Screening
- Domain 2: Referral
- Domain 3: Service Coordination – Orientation to Treatment
- Domain 4: Ongoing Clinical Support
- Domain 5: Client and Family Education
- Domain 6: Documentation
- Domain 7: Professional and Ethical Responsibilities

Each of the domains was tailored to reflect the Addictions Treatment Counselor job role. Treatment planning was specifically eliminated as a separate domain for this examination: treatment planning competencies specific to Addictions Treatment Counselors were incorporated into the other seven domains.

## **Examination Blueprint:**

The questions on the Addictions Treatment Counselor examination were developed from the tasks identified in the Role Delineation Study. Each question is linked to one of the role delineation study task statements. The following section identifies each domain and task that is included on the examination. The total number of questions in each domain is listed next to the domain number and title. The total number of items per domain is further broken down by task, indicating how many questions will be on the exam that measures your competency in the specified task area.

For example, Domain 1: Clinical Evaluation – Screening has 13 questions. Of the 13 questions:

- 4 questions are specific to Task 1.1,
- 5 questions are specific to Task 1.2, and
- 5 questions are specific to Task 1.3.

In addition, each task is linked to its corresponding TAP 21 Dimension. For example, Task 1.1 states, *Assist in gathering of data from the client and other available collateral sources to facilitate client care by using screening instruments and other methods that are sensitive to age, developmental level, culture, and gender. (TAP 21 – Dimension I.A.2)* The task is the first statement, the TAP 21 dimension is in parentheses immediately following the task statement.

You are encouraged to review the content in the *Addictions Counseling Competencies: The Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes of Professional Practice, Technical Assistance Publication (TAP) Series 21* to prepare for the examination.

Each domain and task, as well as the number of items per domain/task follows.

### ***Certified Addiction Treatment Counselor Examination Blueprint***

#### **DOMAIN 1: Clinical Evaluation – Screening 13**

Task 1.1 Assist in gathering of data from the client and other available collateral sources to facilitate client care by using screening instruments and other methods that are sensitive to age, developmental level, culture, and gender. (TAP 21 – Dimension I.A.2) 4

Task 1.2 Observe client for signs of psychoactive substance toxicity, intoxication, and withdrawal; aggression or danger to others; potential for self-inflicted harm or suicide; and coexisting mental health problems. (TAP 21 – Dimension I.A.3) 5

Task 1.3 Assist in engaging the client into treatment. (TAP 21 – Dimension I.A.4) 4

#### **DOMAIN 2: Referral 10**

Task 2.1 Maintain relationships with service agencies and other community resources to facilitate the client’s utilization of available support systems. (TAP 21 – Dimension III.1) 4

Task 2.2 Support clinical staff in arranging referrals to other professionals, agencies, community programs, or other appropriate resources to meet client needs. (TAP 21 – Dimension III.4) 3

Task 2.3 Educate the client about the referral process to increase the likelihood of client understanding and follow through. (TAP 21 – Dimension III.5) 3

**DOMAIN 3: Service Coordination – Orientation to Treatment** **9**

Task 3.1 Complete necessary procedures for admission to treatment. (TAP 21 – Dimension IV.A.4, Dimension II.11) 4

Task 3.2 Describe and reinforce accurate treatment and recovery expectations to the client and involved significant others including, but not limited to, nature of services, program goals, program procedures, rules regarding client conduct, schedule of treatment activities, and client rights and responsibilities. (TAP 21 – Dimension IV.A.5) 5

**DOMAIN 4: Ongoing Clinical Support** **35**

Task 4.1 Maintain a helping relationship with the client characterized by warmth, respect, genuineness, concreteness, and empathy. (TAP 21 – Dimension I.A.1, Dimension V.A.1) 5

Task 4.2 Support the client’s engagement in the treatment and recovery process. (TAP 21 – Dimension I.A.5, Dimension V.A.2) 5

Task 4.3 Facilitate the development of basic and life skills associated with recovery. (TAP 21 – Dimension V.A.9) 4

Task 4.4 Respond appropriately when client’s behavior is inconsistent with stated recovery goals. (TAP 21 – Dimension V.A.6, V.A.11) 4

Task 4.5 Apply crisis management skills. (TAP 21 – Dimension V.A.12) 4

Task 4.6 Support client knowledge, skills, and attitudes that contribute to treatment progress and prevent relapse. (TAP 21 – Dimension V.A.4, Dimension V.A.5, Dimension V.A.13) 5

Task 4.7 Assist in clarifying and providing information concerning the treatment plan to clients and significant others as needed. (TAP 21 – Dimension II.3) 4

Task 4.8 Aid in coordinating treatment activities and community resources. (TAP 21 – Dimension II.9) 4

**DOMAIN 5: Clinical and Family Education** **13**

- Task 5.1 Provide relevant education to raise awareness and support substance abuse prevention treatment and recovery. (TAP 21 – Dimension VI.1, Dimension VI.2, Dimension VI.3, Dimension VI.4, Dimension VI.5, Dimension VI.6) 4
- Task 5.2 Understand and describe the health and behavior problems related to substance use, including transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS, TB, STDs, and other infectious diseases. (TAP 21 – Dimension VI.8) 5
- Task 5.3 Teach life skills, including but not limited to, stress management, relaxation, communication, assertiveness, and refusal skills. (TAP 21 – Dimension VI.9) 4

**DOMAIN 6: Documentation** **9**

- Task 6.1 Record client activities in relation to treatment goals and objectives using accepted principles of documentation. (TAP 21 – Dimension VII.1, Dimension VII.5) 4
- Task 6.2 Protect client rights to privacy and confidentiality in the preparation and handling of records, especially in relation to the communication of client information with third parties. (TAP 21 – Dimension VII.2) 5

**DOMAIN 7: Professional and Ethical Responsibility** **11**

- Task 7.1 Participate in ongoing supervision and consultation. (TAP 21 – Dimension 1.B.3, Dimension VIII.5, Dimension VIII.8) 2
- Task 7.2 Adhere to established professional codes of ethics in order to maintain professional standards and safeguard the client. (TAP 21 – Dimension VIII.1, Dimension VIII.9) 3
- Task 7.3 Adhere to all applicable laws and regulations regarding the treatment of substance use disorders. (TAP 21 - Dimension VIII.2) 3
- Task 7.4 Adapt and modify personal behavior appropriately in response to individual differences that influence client behavior. (TAP 21 - Dimension VIII.4) 3

## Sample Questions:

The following questions are similar to those that you will find on the examination; however, these questions WILL NOT appear on the examination. The purpose of sample questions is to provide you with an example of how the questions are written.

- Each question is multiple-choice with 4 choices: A, B, C, or D.
  - Carefully read the question and each answer before answering.
  - Choose the single BEST answer.
  - Answers are provided on the last page of this booklet.
1. A client informs you that he has frequent thoughts and plans for suicide. He says, however, that if you tell anyone, he will definitely carry out his plan. What should you do?
    - a. Conduct a family intervention as soon as possible
    - b. Convince him that suicide is never the answer to problems
    - c. Develop a protective treatment plan to prevent the suicide
    - d. Have him sign a release so the family can be notified
  
  2. A client presents in a crisis situation. As a counselor, your MOST IMPORTANT function is to:
    - a. Solve the clients presenting problem
    - b. Help convert the emergency into a solvable problem
    - c. Refer the client to the nearest psychiatrist
    - d. Try to keep the client from getting more upset
  
  3. Client files should be readily accessible to whom?
    - a. All staff at the facility
    - b. The client and the client's family
    - c. The client and the treatment team
    - d. The treatment team only

4. During a session you notice that the client is getting progressively more agitated. You suspect a potential for violence unless something is done immediately. Your BEST course of action would be to:
  - a. Confront the client's behavior
  - b. Instruct the client in relaxation techniques
  - c. Continue trying to problem solve
  - d. Call for assistance
  
5. Experts refer to three stages of effective treatment for alcohol and drug problems. The first stage consists of medical-physical interventions. What are the second and third stages?
  - a. Skill development and reinforcement
  - b. Psychosocial rehabilitation and aftercare
  - c. Vocational counseling and aftercare
  - d. Reinforcement and aftercare
  
6. Federal regulations allow the disclosure of confidential client information under all of the following circumstances EXCEPT:
  - a. When the client has provided written consent.
  - b. When there is a medical emergency regarding the client.
  - c. When the client's spouse requests the information.
  - d. When the court order requires the information.
  
7. If a client is experiencing difficulties conforming to the rules and expectations of the program, the counselor's FIRST course of action would be to:
  - a. Refer the client to the agency's psychiatrist
  - b. Consult with the supervisor or other treatment team members
  - c. Initiate client discharge procedures as soon as possible
  - d. Cancel the next treatment session until the client follows the rules

8. Of the following statements made by a client, which would MOST warrant documentation in the client's progress notes?
  - a. "Ever since I stopped drinking, my emotional swings have been quite intense."
  - b. "Let's change the subject. Did anyone see the game last night?"
  - c. "I am finding group support to be very helpful."
  - d. "Getting caught for drunk driving has been a mixed blessing."
  
9. Providing the client with information regarding program rules and infractions that can lead to discharge from the program usually as part of the:
  - a. Family interview
  - b. Orientation/Intake process
  - c. Group therapy sessions
  - d. Psycho-social Assessment
  
10. The orientation process is closely related to:
  - a. Intake
  - b. Assessment
  - c. Screening
  - d. All of the Above
  
11. The term "referral" pertains to:
  - a. Identifying and ranking the client's problems in priority order.
  - b. Meeting with other professionals to determine the best treatment.
  - c. Assisting the client to using available community services.
  - d. Providing drug and alcohol recovery tips to the client.
  
12. What would be the BEST way for a counselor to help a client who is lacking job skills?
  - a. Help the client write a resume
  - b. Schedule the client for a job interview
  - c. Refer the client to vocational training
  - d. Identify the clients needs and teach job skills

13. When educating a client about addiction, the counselor must consider which of the following?
- a. The client's cognitive abilities
  - b. The educational needs of the client
  - c. The available educational materials
  - d. All of the above
14. Which of the following DOES NOT have to appear on a Release of Information form?
- a. The purpose of the release of information
  - b. The client's signature
  - c. The counselor's signature
  - d. The release's effective dates
15. Which of the following is a potential sign of relapse?
- a. Frequent attendance at support meetings
  - b. Overconfidence in sobriety skills
  - c. Working the 12 steps too quickly
  - d. Increased sexual activity
16. Which of the following patterns of drinking is accurately associated with the term "alcoholism"?
- a. Lack of tolerance for alcohol
  - b. Frequent short periods of sobriety
  - c. Inability to control the amount one drinks
  - d. Light drinking during the week, social drinking during weekends
17. Which of the following skills is MOST helpful when a counselor is trying to get the client involved in the treatment process?
- a. Verbalizing and setting goals on a daily and/or weekly basis.
  - b. Showing the client how to correct his/her behavioral errors.
  - c. Conducting relaxation techniques with the client at each session.
  - d. Driving the client to and from each treatment provider.

18. Which of the following statements is TRUE?
- a. Knowledge of alternative resources is not important for counselors.
  - b. A referral should only be made when the client is in crisis.
  - c. Counselors should visit facilities they frequently make referrals to.
  - d. Clients make their own referrals to demonstrate self-motivation.
19. Which of the following would be the MOST APPROPRIATE way to assure that the client will follow-through on a referral?
- a. Give the client the phone number, address and a contact name for the referral.
  - b. Make the referral, schedule the first appointment, and drive the client to the facility.
  - c. Contact the agency to make the referral and have the client make the appointment.
  - d. Arrange for a family member or close friend to take the client to the referral.
20. Which words best characterize the changes that occur in an alcohol or drug abuser's relationship with family, friends, and society as a result of the substance abuse?
- a. Contempt and hostility
  - b. Independence and self-reliance
  - c. Immorality and sexual acting out
  - d. Withdrawal and isolation

### **Scoring:**

The passing score for the Certified Addictions Treatment Counselor Examination is 70%. Candidates may take the examination as many times as is necessary to pass the exam (the test fee must be paid for each test administration).

Comprehensive Examination Services (CES) will score all examination answer keys and mail the score reports to CAADE. The turnaround from the date the examination is administered to the date CAADE mails score reports to candidates is approximately 4 to 6 weeks. Candidates will receive a letter that states

whether they passed or failed the examination. The letter also provides candidates with a breakdown of their score by domain, providing the candidate with areas of strength and weakness.

If you feel that the results of your examination are incorrect, you may appeal to the California Association for Alcohol and Drug Educators (CAADE) for a hand rescoring. In order to request a hand rescoring, you must submit a written request to CAADE within 30 (thirty) calendar days of the postmark on your score report. CES will hand-score your examination and mail you and CAADE the results. The fee of \$45.00 will be assessed for hand rescoring.

For confidentiality purposes, neither CES nor CAADE will provide score reports over the phone or through e-mail. In addition, candidates should be aware that examination security procedures do not allow candidates to access test questions, answer keys, or other secure materials.

### **Examination Site Procedures:**

The examination proctor will thoroughly discuss all examination site procedures prior to beginning the examination. It is recommended that candidates become familiar with the following do's and don'ts prior to reaching the examination administration site. In addition, all candidates must understand that CAADE and CES hereby assume no liability of any nature whatsoever for any personal items that the candidate may have brought to, left at, or left outside of the examination site.

### ***Admission to the Examination:***

- Report to the examination site no later than the time indicated on your admission letter/examination schedule. It is recommended that you arrive THIRTY (30) minutes prior to the published examination start time.

- Bring your admission letter to the test site. You will be required to show the admission ticket to gain entry to the test site.
- Bring at least one of the following legal documents, bearing your picture and signature to the test site: driver's license; state identification card; passport; notarized photograph bearing your signature. Student ID cards and Employment ID cards are not acceptable documentation.

**You will not be allowed into the test site without your admission letter and a legal document bearing your photo and signature.**

***Late Arrivals:***

- The door of the examination room will be locked at the designated start time. If a candidate arrives after the stated starting time, the late candidate WILL NOT be allowed to sit for the examination on that test date.
- The late candidate may apply to take the exam at its next administration and will have to pay the examination fee again.

***Examination Rules:***

- No examination materials, documents, or memorandum of any kind are allowed to be taken from the examination site.
- Listen carefully to the instructions given by the examination proctor. Examination proctors are not qualified or authorized to answer questions concerning the examination content. However, they are able to answer procedural questions.
- An examinee will be allowed to leave the room in case of an emergency, but he/she will not be permitted to return to the examination room.
- Smoking is not permitted in the examination room or restrooms.
- Do not bring food or drink into the examination room.

**If you bring prohibited items to the examination site, you will not be allowed to bring these items into the site, nor will CAADE or CES have any responsibility for safeguarding items not allowed into the site. Review the following list of do's and don'ts prior to arriving to take the exam.**

***Do:***

- Leave all books, papers or other reference materials at home. NO materials will be allowed into the examination site.
- Dress comfortably, but appropriately for the examination. It is suggested that you bring a jacket or sweater if the room temperature is cooler than your individual preference.
- Ensure requests for special accommodations have been made and approved prior to taking the examination. Special accommodations can not be made on the day of the examination.
- Leave all electronic devices, including computer, cell phone, cameras, recorders, dictionaries, pagers, etc., at home or in your automobile.
- If you are sensitive to noise, you may bring earplugs to wear during the examination.

***Do Not:***

- Bring briefcases, portfolios, fanny packs, or backpacks. Women may bring a purse, but will be required to place the purse under her seat and may not access any items in the purse until leaving the examination site.
- Bring cameras, cell-phones, computers, tape recorders or other audio-visual device.
- Bring white or colored paper, note pads or writing tablets. Scratch paper will be provided by the proctor if necessary.
- Bring canisters of mace, pepper spray or other personal defense item.

## **Special Testing Accommodations:**

Individuals with disabilities and/or religious obligations that require modification to the examination administration procedures may request specific accommodations, in writing, to the CAADE Central Office, no fewer than sixty (60) days prior to the published exam administration date. The written request must be accompanied by official documentation of the disability or religious issue (contact CAADE to determine what constitutes official documentation). Special accommodations will be provided for when the documentation supports the need.

## **What do I study?**

### **The test is based on TAP 21 – study it!**

Some find it helpful to attend a workshop – due to conflict of interest, the CAADE Central Office does not have this information – visit our website for more details at [www.caade.org](http://www.caade.org).

## **Test Taking Tips:**

Test anxiety is very common. To help prepare yourself and manage any test anxiety that you may have, review the following tips. These tips were taken from the following web-site ([www.testtakingtips.com](http://www.testtakingtips.com)), which you may want to access for additional test taking techniques.

### ***General Test Taking Tips:***

- ✓ Eat before a test, having food in your stomach will give you energy and help you focus, but avoid heavy foods which can make you groggy.
- ✓ Don't try to pull an all nighter, get at least 3 hours of sleep before the test.

- ✓ Try to show up at least 30 minutes before the test will start.
- ✓ Go to the bathroom before walking into the exam room, you don't want to waste anytime worrying about your bodily needs during the test.
- ✓ Keep a positive attitude throughout the whole test and try to stay relaxed, if you start to feel nervous take a few deep breaths to relax.
- ✓ Keep your eyes on your own paper, you don't want to appear to be cheating and cause unnecessary trouble for yourself.
- ✓ Don't rush but pace yourself, read the entire question and look for keywords.
- ✓ Always read the whole question carefully, don't make assumptions about what the question might be.
- ✓ Don't worry if others finish before you; focus on the test in front of you.
- ✓ When you are finished, if you have time left look over your test, make sure that you have answered all the questions, only change an answer if you misread or misinterpreted the question because the first answer that you put is usually the correct one.

***Tips on Answering Multiple-Choice Questions:***

- ✓ Read the question before you look at the answer.
- ✓ Come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers, this way the choices given on the test won't throw you off or trick you.
- ✓ Read all the choices before choosing your answer.
- ✓ Eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- ✓ If you do not know the answer, always take an educated guess and select an answer.

- ✓ Don't keep on changing your answer, usually your first choice is the right one, unless you miss-read the question.
- ✓ In "All of the above" and "None of the above" choices, if you are certain one of the statements is true don't choose "None of the above" or one of the statements are false don't choose "All of the above".
- ✓ If there is an "All of the above" option and you know that at least two of the choices are correct select the "All of the above" choice
- ✓ If you don't know an answer skip it, go on with the rest of the test and come back to it later, maybe on another part of the test there'll be something that will help you out with that question.

### Sample Questions Answer Key:

Question	Domain	Answer
1	On-going Clinical Support	C
2	On-going Clinical Support	B
3	Documentation	C
4	On-going Clinical Support	D
5	Service Coordination – Orientation to Treatment	B
6	Professional and Ethical Responsibility	C
7	On-going Clinical Support	B
8	Documentation	A
9	Service Coordination – Orientation to Treatment	B
10	Clinical Evaluation – Screening	D
11	Referral	C
12	On-going Clinical Support	C
13	Clinical and Family Education	D
14	Professional and Ethical Responsibility	C
15	Clinical and Family Education	B
16	Clinical and Family Education	C
17	Clinical Evaluation – Screening	A
18	Referral	C
19	On-going Clinical Support	D
20	On-going Clinical Support	D