



# The Community Empowerment Consultation Model

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## Rationale

Professionals in the counseling field take on many different roles throughout their careers. One vital part of the professional counselor and spectrum of work is in consulting. This consultation occurs on a variety of levels and in a vast array of settings. As consultation takes place frequently and in various ways and places, it is important and an ethically responsible to ensure that there are models to follow that are not only empirically supported, but culturally sensitive as well.

The authors of the presentation conducted a review of literature of the main mental health consultation models ultimately focusing on the Mental Health Consultation Model (Caplan and Caplan, 1970), which is frequently cited as a pivotal and readily used model in consultation in the mental health setting (e.g., community agencies, private practice settings, etc.). The authors noted a need for the development of a model that is more culturally sensitive as well as more responsive to systemic issues in the community. The authors thus developed a model based on the Community Counseling Model (Lewis, Lewis, Daniels & D'Andrea, 2003) as well as the Caplan and Caplan model resulting in the Community Empowerment Consultation Model (CECM).

The CECM is a consultation model that is founded on providing valuable resources and skills to the consultees and to the clients, both directly and indirectly, however it also adds and emphasizes a new element as well. The CECM takes into account the culture of the organization based on diversity within the employees as well as the client population it serves. Besides the cultural sensitivity component, the CECM incorporates a model of empowerment by addressing the need to help consultees and clients learn to recognize such things as social and institutional barriers as well as ways to problem-solve in order to face challenges on their own in the future without the aid of consultants. By weaving empowerment throughout the model, clients may begin to develop a sense of control over any types of marginalization or powerlessness they may be facing.

Based on findings from a literature review conducted, as well as hands on experience working with multicultural populations in different clinical settings the Community Counseling Model (Lewis et al., 2003) and its basic principles were utilized to draw upon and add to the research-grounded Mental Health Consultation Model developed by Caplan & Caplan (1970). Counselors in both the clinical and academic arenas will encounter consultation in some form or another and it is imperative that they understand how to approach this in an ethical manner based on their specific consultee and client population. There is imperative need for individual, group and community empowerment to be focal in consultation services (Crethar, Bellamy, Bicknell-Hentges & Giorgis, 2002), and the CECM attempts to encompass this deficit

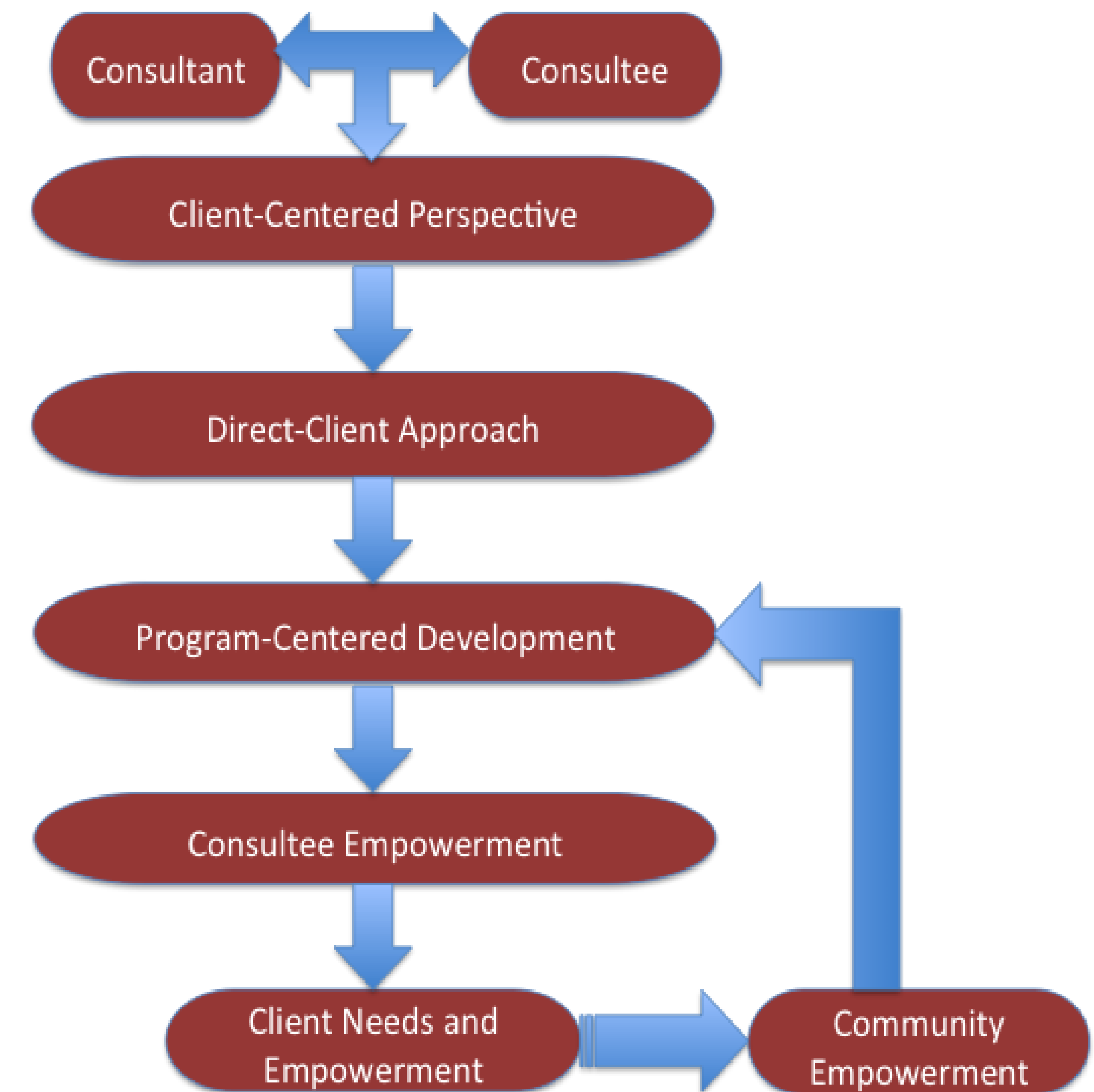
## Counseling Ethics

Counseling ethics play an immense role in the topic at hand. The authors emphasize that advocacy is an important piece to mental health consultation in that each client and consultee is treated without discrimination and fairness, equality and respect. The CECM is based partly on the ACA Code which reads "when appropriate, counselors advocate at the individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to examine potential barriers and obstacles that inhibit access and/or the growth and development of clients" (ACA Code of Ethics, 2005, p. 5). The empowerment component in the CECM also reiterates the principle of autonomy because it is a goal in this model that consultees and clients will thrive on their own without the aid of consultants following the consultation. Due to the need for consultants in the CECM to treat each consultation from the unique standpoint of that client or consultees diverse background, the principle of beneficence stands out within this topic as well.

## Empowerment

Empowerment goes beyond the consultant empowering the consultee and client. By weaving this piece throughout the consultation, the community at large can begin to also become empowered. As the consultees in the organization gain the ability to recognize barriers that can affect clients' empowerment and equality, they will decrease this overall practice within the organization settings. When these organizations begin to make fundamental changes, the community itself can be empowered to follow this pattern as well. The people that make up organizations are also part of the community at large and therefore by empowering individuals, the consultant is also making overall changes in the community.

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## References

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