UNIT 7: INTRODUCTION TO COUNSELLING SKILLS (LEVEL 3)

Learning outcomes

By completing this unit candidates will demonstrate understanding of the theories within counselling, ethics and confidentiality in counselling and the difference between counselling and other forms of support. Candidates will also demonstrate understanding of the basic skills applied in counselling, the importance of them and demonstrate ability to apply the skills in practice in an appropriate environment. They will demonstrate understanding of the importance of self-awareness in developing effective counselling skills.

This unit can only be evidenced in the context of adult service users.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment objectives</th>
<th>Knowledge, understanding and skills</th>
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</table>
| 1 Investigate theories of counselling | Theories related to counselling:  
  - humanistic, eg Carl Rogers  
  - behavioural, eg Skinner  
  - psychodynamic, eg Sigmund Freud  
  - integrative, eg Gerard Egan  
  Main features of counselling:  
  - challenges people to accept responsibility for their own lives  
  - high value of the importance of his/her subjective reality  
  - to trust their inner resources  
  - the role of the learning process  
  - high value on the experience of the individual  
  - motivation  
  Core conditions of counselling:  
  - empathy  
  - congruence  
  - unconditional positive regard  
  - self-regard  
  - self-actualisation  
  Counsellor:  
  - own prejudices, attitudes and values  
  - own ability to achieve the core conditions |
| 2 Describe the place of ethics and confidentiality in counselling | Need for an ethical framework  
 Need for confidentiality (continued overleaf) |
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| 2 Cont. | When disclosure is necessary: eg  
- threat to own life and others  
- crime  
- child abuse |
| Describe the place of ethics and confidentiality in counselling | |
| 3 Recognise the difference between counselling and different forms of support | Forms of support: eg  
- counselling  
- mentoring  
- coaching  

Why people need/seek counselling: eg  
- unable to cope with daily living  
- having a specific problem to resolve  

Ways of providing support:  
- informal  
- formal  
- advocacy  

Evaluate the need for professional counselling from alternative perspectives:  
- service user  
- other service users  
- formal counsellors |
| 4 Demonstrate understanding of self-awareness in developing effective counselling skills | Relationship between self-awareness and effective counselling:  
- listening to self  
- self-acceptance  

Review own learning needs in relation to increasing self-awareness |
| 5 Establish an environment that is conducive to counselling | Make initial contact with service user:  
- responding to communication  
- active listening  
- non-judgemental acceptance  
- empathy  
- encouraging service user to express their concerns  
- respond to issues arising from race, gender, sexuality, age, class, religion, physical ability  

Record:  
- own notes  
- subsequent notes  
- consider confidentiality (continued overleaf) |
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| **5 Cont.** Establish an environment that is conducive to counselling | Prepare environment:  
- physical, eg room layout, material requirements  
- social/emotional |
| **6 Apply counselling skills with a service user** | Difference between open and closed questions:  
- negative effects of ‘why’ questions  
- effectiveness of ‘why’ questions  
Consider:  
- how  
- why  
- when  
- where  
- do  
- are  
- have  
- can  
Factors that hinder good responding:  
- poor communication  
- leading questions  
- multiple questions  
Factors that help good responding:  
- focus on the individual  
- use of effective communication, eg reflection, paraphrasing, summarising  
- active listening  
- establishing good relationships  
- need for and the use of silence  
Factors that help and hinder active listening:  
- focus on the individual  
- own limitations within listening  
- ways of improving own listening skills  
- interest/disinterest  
- attitude/feelings towards service user  
- state of self  
Record  
- own notes  
- subsequent notes  
- consider confidentiality  
Use questioning, listening skills and responding skills in a counselling context |
### Assessment objectives | Knowledge, understanding and skills

| 7 | Evaluate the success of the counselling session | Evaluate in terms of:  
- achievement of aim  
- achievement of objectives  
- environment  
- own application of skills  
- response of service user  
- use of recording documentation |
|---|---|---|
| | | Plan how to improve counselling techniques in terms of:  
- skills  
- monitoring self  
- recording  
- improvements for service user |

### Assessment

This unit is centre-assessed and externally moderated.

In order to achieve this unit candidates must produce a portfolio of evidence showing that they can meet all of the assessment objectives.

Portfolios of work must be produced independently. They will need to be made available, together with witness statements and any other supporting documentation, to the OCR Visiting Moderator when required.

Centres must confirm to OCR that the evidence produced by candidates is authentic. An OCR Centre Authentication Form is provided in the Centre Handbook and includes a declaration for assessors to sign. It is a requirement of the QCA Common Criteria for all Qualifications that proof of authentication is received.

### Guidance on assessment and evidence requirements

This unit can only be evidenced in the context of adult service users.

Candidates should carry out activities and behave in a way that would be acceptable in the workplace. Ideally tasks should be carried out in a real work situation. However, simulated work environments will be acceptable and **must** be carried out for the counselling session. See section Simulation for further guidance.

Centres should generate their own assignments to cover the assessment objectives. OCR suggests that the following tasks would create sufficient evidence to meet the assessment objectives for this unit.

**Prepare materials for a handbook and a display that could be used by trainees who are interested in becoming counsellors.**

**Demonstrate how to conduct a counselling session (simulated).**

- Investigate two theories of counselling, summarising the main points to form a series of aids that could be used with trainees in health, social care or early years settings. Include the core conditions of counselling and the influence of the counsellor.
- Produce materials to give information on ethics and the need for confidentiality in counselling.
• Find out the differences between counselling and other forms of support, including informal, formal and advocacy.

• Produce materials to show the trainees the importance of understanding self-awareness and developing effective counselling skills.

• Establish the environment for a counselling simulation and make initial contact between you as the counsellor and a service user. Within the handbook, explain the important points to be covered when preparing for and participating in initial contact with a service user.

• Participate in a counselling simulation demonstrating all the skills and techniques given in Assessment Objective 6. This should last for a minimum of 10 minutes.

• Produce a critical evaluation of the skills used within the counselling session, covering all the requirements of Assessment Objective 7.

Candidates may provide their responses in writing and/or through the use of video and assessor written records. Witness statements completed by the task supervisor will include the requirement for supervisors to comment on the candidates’ skills and their ability to apply their knowledge in a practical context.

Candidates are not expected to have in-depth knowledge of the work of counselling theorists. They should have knowledge of the key points of the theories and how these can be applied to counselling sessions.

It is important that candidates understand the main differences in informal and formal counselling approaches.

Recording documentation during the simulated initial contact and the simulated counselling session must be submitted with the evidence. Candidates may need to give some thought as to the design of recording documentation, particularly from an ‘ease of use’ perspective.

For this unit it is advisable that candidates take part in several counselling simulations in order for them to practice their skills. It may also be beneficial if a video is used to tape one session in order for candidates to evaluate their application of the skills effectively.

This unit has links to Unit 2: Working with service users in care settings, as some skills are developed in both units. Links with Unit 3: Behavioural awareness in care can also be made when studying the work of Carl Rogers.

Signposting to Key Skills

✓ The unit contains opportunities for developing the Key Skill, and possibly for generating portfolio evidence, if teaching and learning is focused on that aim.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Skill reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C3.1a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>N3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3.1b</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>N3.2a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3.2</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>N3.2b</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3.3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>N3.2c</td>
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<td>N3.2d</td>
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<td>N3.3</td>
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Unit 7: Introduction to counselling skills

Mapping to National Occupational Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOS/ NWC</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Knowledge specification</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HSC31</td>
<td>Promote effective communication for and about individuals</td>
<td>1-5, 9-13, 15, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH1</td>
<td>Promote effective communication and relationships with people who are troubled or distressed</td>
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</table>

Resources

The following are suggestions of resources that could be useful when delivering the unit. They are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, and candidates should be encouraged to gather information from a variety of sources.

Books

British Association For Counselling

Evans, G. (2007) Counselling Skills for Dummies
John Wiley and Sons

Hodder Arnold

Tschudin, V. (1995) Counselling Skills for Nurses
Bailliere Tindall

Open University Press

Parry, G. (2002) Coping with Crises
BPS Blackwell

Sage Publications Ltd

Routledge

Wadsworth

PCCS Books

Websites

Concord Video and Film Council. URL: http://www.concordvideo.co.uk
An educational charity dealing with the hire and sale of videos and films. A number of videos are available concerning counselling and psychotherapy.
The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. URL: http://www.bacp.co.uk
The UK’s professional membership association for counsellors and psychotherapists. Contains a publications section.

The British Association for the Person-Centred Approach. URL: http://www.bapca.org.uk
Relate – The Relationship People: www.relate.org.uk

Empathy, listening and Hugs: www.psychological-hug.com/

Every Child Matters Common Core Communication Skills: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/commoncore/communication/corecommunication skills
United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy. URL:http://www.ukcp.org.uk
National umbrella organisation for psychotherapy.

counsellingbooks.com. URL:http://www.counsellingbooks.com
A bookshop for people in the caring professions.
### Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AO</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Merit</th>
<th>Distinction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Candidates show a basic understanding of two theories of counselling, summarising the main points. They identify the core conditions of counselling and show a basic understanding of the influence of the counsellor.</td>
<td>Candidates show a sound level of two theories of counselling, accurately describing the main points. They describe the core conditions of counselling and show a sound understanding of the influence of the counsellor.</td>
<td>Candidates show a high level of understanding of two theories of counselling, giving an in-depth account of the main points. They give a comprehensive account of the core conditions of counselling and show a high level of understanding of the influence of the counsellor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Candidates describe, at a basic level, the ethics relating to counselling and the issues related to confidentiality and the need for disclosure.</td>
<td>Candidates describe, showing a sound level of understanding, the ethics relating to counselling and the issues related to confidentiality and the need for disclosure.</td>
<td>Candidates describe, showing a high level of understanding, the ethics relating to counselling and the issues related to confidentiality and the need for disclosure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Candidates show a basic level of understanding when describing the differences between counselling and other forms of support. They outline and give examples of informal, formal and advocacy.</td>
<td>Candidates show a sound level of understanding when describing the differences between counselling and other forms of support. They describe and give a range of examples of informal, formal and advocacy.</td>
<td>Candidates show a high level of understanding when describing the differences between counselling and other forms of support. They explain and give a wide range of examples of informal, formal and advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>When considering the relationship between self-awareness and effective counselling, candidates discuss, at a basic level, the importance of listening to self and self-acceptance. They review, showing a basic level of understanding, their own learning needs with a view to increasing self-awareness. They are given some support to achieve this.</td>
<td>When considering the relationship between self-awareness and effective counselling, candidates discuss, in detail, the importance of listening to self and self-acceptance. They review, showing a sound level of understanding, their own learning needs with a view to increasing self-awareness. They work independently to achieve this.</td>
<td>When considering the relationship between self-awareness and effective counselling, candidates give a comprehensive account of the importance of listening to self and self-acceptance. Reference is made to theory or to alternative perspectives. There is some evidence of originality. They review, showing a high level of understanding, their own learning needs with a view to increasing self-awareness. They work independently and with confidence to achieve this.</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>6</strong></td>
<td>Practical activities of preparing an environment and making initial contact with a service user and participating in a simulated counselling session are carried out accurately, at a basic level, with some prompting. Evidence of preparation of the environment shows that all the requirements of Assessment Objectives 5 and 6 have been addressed at a basic level. The counselling session lasts for a minimum of 10 minutes. Candidates’ own notes are brief but accurately reflect the main points relating to the session.</td>
<td>Practical activities of preparing an environment and making initial contact with a service user and participating in a counselling session (simulated) are carried out accurately and competently and without prompting. Evidence of preparation of the environment shows that all the requirements of Assessment Objectives 5 and 6 have been addressed in detail. The counselling session lasts for a minimum of 10 minutes. Candidates’ own notes are detailed and accurately reflect the main points relating to the session.</td>
<td>Practical activities of preparing an environment and making initial contact with a service user and participating in a counselling session (simulated) are carried out accurately, competently and confidently and without prompting. Evidence of preparation of the environment shows a comprehensive approach to the requirements of Assessment Objectives 5 and 6. Reasons for the actions taken during preparation are given. The counselling session lasts for a minimum of 10 minutes. Candidates’ own notes are detailed and give a comprehensive account of the session with some explanation for actions taken.</td>
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**Achievement of Assessment Objectives 5 and 6 must be supported by an observation sheet/witness statement or other appropriate evidence.**

| 7 | When evaluating the success of the counselling session, candidates meet all the requirements of evaluate in Assessment Objective 7 at a basic level. They show the ability to reflect, to analyse and to make simple recommendations for improvements. | When evaluating the success of the counselling session, candidates meet all the requirements of evaluate in Assessment Objective 7. They show the ability to reflect, to analyse in depth and to make realistic and detailed recommendations for improvements. | When evaluating the success of the counselling session, candidates meet all the requirements of evaluate in Assessment Objective 7. They show the ability to reflect, to analyse in depth, to make judgements and to make realistic and detailed recommendations for improvements. Candidates include feedback from two different perspectives. |