

Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Counselling: Group Counselling Skills

Unit code: F1EK 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to develop the candidates understanding of Group Counselling and to develop skills both as a group participant and as a group facilitator.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of group process and dynamics within a personal development group.
- 2 Develop and demonstrate self-awareness as a group participant.
- 3 Develop and demonstrate group facilitation skills.

Credit points and level: 1 HN Credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Recommended prior knowledge and skills:

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Problem Solving and Working with Others at Higher in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Context for delivery: If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment: Specific advice on assessment for this Unit is given for each Outcome. Candidates must achieve all of the minimum evidence specified for each Outcome in order to pass the Unit. Outcome 1 is assessed by written questions. Outcomes 2 and 3 are assessed by practical groupwork.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Demonstrate an understanding of group process and dynamics within a personal development group

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Stages of group development theories
- ◆ Group norms at different stages of group development
- ◆ Dependency needs of group members
- ◆ Roles adopted by group members

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ identify and describe stages of development of group accurately in relation to group theory
- ◆ demonstrate awareness of group norms at different stages of group development
- ◆ demonstrate awareness of dependency needs of group members
- ◆ demonstrate awareness of roles adopted by group members

Assessment guidelines

Assessment should be generated through an assignment consisting of extended response questions.

Outcome 2

Develop and demonstrate self-awareness as a group participant

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ individual interaction within personal development groups
- ◆ relationships with other group members
- ◆ relationships with group facilitators
- ◆ individual reactions to group feedback

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Group Counselling Skills

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ demonstrate ability to monitor own participation within personal development group
- ◆ demonstrate ability to monitor relationship with other group members
- ◆ demonstrate ability to monitor relationship with group facilitator
- ◆ demonstrate ability to monitor own reactions to group feedback

Assessment guidelines

Assessment evidence should be generated by checklist during participation in personal development group.

Outcome 3

Develop and demonstrate group facilitation skills

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Communicate core conditions to group members
- ◆ Offer constructive feedback to group members
- ◆ Distinguish between enabling and rescuing within the group
- ◆ Maintain appropriate boundaries within the group

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ demonstrate ability to communicate core conditions to group members
- ◆ demonstrate ability to offer constructive feedback to group members
- ◆ demonstrate ability to distinguish between enabling and rescuing within the group
- ◆ demonstrate ability to maintain appropriate boundaries within the group

Assessment guidelines

Assessment evidence should be generated by checklist during facilitation of personal development group.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1EK 34
Unit title: Counselling: Group Counselling Skills
Superclass category: PM
Date of publication: April 2007
Version: 01

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

Source: SQA

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Counselling: Group Counselling Skills

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

Personal Development Group:

Facilitation of this group will very much depend on the theoretical orientation of the facilitator. The aim of the group, as described in pages 102-103 of Dryden et al. (1995), is to develop 'an atmosphere of trust and spirit of encounter' in which 'the members can help each other identify needs which might otherwise have been blindspots..... if the right spirit of encounter is established (it) can help members become aware of personal development issues.....and understand the interpersonal dynamics relating to those issues.....Thereafter, the group can help the members to explore the roots of the issue.....as well as developing other ways of being'. It is recommended that there should be no more than nine candidates to one facilitator in each group.

Some facilitators may wish to provide a particular focus for the group at various points, others will prefer an unstructured group which provides "a context for experimenting with the developing Self" (Mearns, 1997).

It is not the intention that group members over-expose themselves; the intention is that they learn to risk only as much as they can handle and that they learn to take responsibility for their own emotional safety.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Outcome 1

Outcome 1 introduces the practice of personal development groups and outlines the concepts of stages of development, group norms, dependency needs and roles.

- (a) **Initial stage:** Orientation, Hesitant Participation, Search for meaning, Dependency;
Second stage: Conflict, Dominance, Rebellion;
Third stage: Development of Cohesiveness (Yalom, 1995).
- (b) Forming, storming, norming, performing (Tuckman 1965) some have added 'mourning' or 'adjourning' to this model.
- (c) Anxiety, Discord, Trust, Commitment, Closure (Hough 1996, 1998).

It is interesting to compare these developmental stage models with 'equilibrium' models ie Kurt Lewin's (1973) 'Field Theory' or Whittaker and Lieberman's (1964) 'Focal Conflict Theory' which provide an explanation of the strong pressure group members often feel to conform to group norms. In Lewin's model, the equilibrium is seen as a balance between 'driving' and 'restraining' forces which in turn are related to the tension between the group goal and the group environment. Whittaker and Lieberman developed the idea of 'driving' and 'restraining' forces into 'disturbing motives' and 'reactive motives'. If a group member breaks one of the group norms or threatens an established boundary (disturbing motive), a disturbance of the group equilibrium occurs resulting in a reaction.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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'Reactive motives' are to do with fears of such things as abandonment, ridicule, criticism, loss of control, overwhelming feelings etc. the action and reaction constitute a 'focal conflict' to which the group will always find a solution. A 'restrictive solution' involves denial or displacement and results in inhibiting the group's potential. A group member may leave, group members may avoid discussing the disturbance, one member may become the scapegoat, group members may unite against an outside enemy etc. by contrast, an 'enabling solution' involves creativity and acceptance of difference. Problems will be resolved or the recognition of differences will be used to the advantage of the group. New possibilities for future behaviour in the group are created.

Roles adopted:

Egan (1977) refers to five types of group members: the Detractor, the Observer, the Participant, the Contributor and the Leader. It is just as valuable for group members to describe roles in their own way and very important that they are aware of changing roles according to circumstance. It is also important that leadership and facilitation are seen as shared activities.

It is suggested that at least two of the following dependency needs are covered when demonstrating awareness of dependency needs:

- ◆ reliance on facilitator
- ◆ reliance on particular group members
- ◆ need for approval

Outcome 2

Outcome 2 introduces the candidate to the experience of participating in a personal development group.

The key words 'develop', consistently' and 'monitor' mean that the personal development group should be a feature of the whole course so that the candidate is given a genuine chance to develop group skills and self-awareness in a group setting over an extended period of time.

It is suggested that at least two of the following examples of participation are covered when monitoring own participation within group:

- ◆ taking responsibility
- ◆ openness to learning
- ◆ openness to feedback
- ◆ resistance

It is suggested that at least two of the following aspects of relationship with group members/facilitator is covered:

- ◆ reaction to conflict
- ◆ reaction to emotion
- ◆ collusion
- ◆ fear of rejection

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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- ◆ scapegoating
- ◆ dependence

Outcome 3

Outcome 3 introduces the candidate to the experience of facilitating a personal development group.

Constructive feedback: Hawkins and Shoet (1989) provide an excellent explanation of how to give clear, owned, regular, balanced, specific feedback as well as guidance on receiving feedback on pages 83–84 of **Supervision In The Helping Professions**.

Demonstration of core conditions should include:

- ◆ empathy
- ◆ congruence
- ◆ unconditional positive regard

It is suggested that at least two of the following aspects of constructive feedback are covered:

- ◆ clear
- ◆ owned
- ◆ regular
- ◆ balanced
- ◆ specific

The two main boundaries that should be adhered to are:

- ◆ maintaining confidentiality within the group
- ◆ adhering to agreed group rules

Key texts:

Bibliography

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| BARNES ET AL | <i>An Introduction To Groupwork; A Group Analytic Perspective</i>
ISBN: 0333162249 |
| BENSON JF | <i>Working More Creatively In Groups</i> ISBN: 0415230381 |
| COREY & COREY | <i>Groups; Process & Practice</i> ISBN: 0534347894 |
| JACOBS ET AL | <i>Group Counselling Strategies & Skills</i> ISBN: 0534367577 |
| WHITAKER DS | <i>Using Groups to Help People</i> ISBN: 0415195624 |

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Group Counselling Skills

References

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EGAN G (1977) *You and Me*, California; Brooks/Cole

HAWKINS P & SHOHET R (1989) *Supervision in The Helping Professions*, Buckingham; OUP

HOUGH M (1996) *Counselling Skills*, Harlow; Longman

HOUGH M (1998) *Counselling Skills and Theory*, London; Hodder and Stoughton

LEWIN K (1973) *Resolving Social Conflicts*, London; Souvenir

MEARNS D (1997) *Person-Centred Counselling Training*, London; Sage

TUCKMAN BW (1965) *Developmental Sequence in Small Groups*, Psychological Bulletin Vol 63

WHITAKER D & LIEBERMAN MA (1964) *Psychotherapy Through the Group Process*, London; Tavistock (*unfortunately out of print*)

YALOM ID (1995) *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* (4th ed), New York; BasicBooks

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Problem Solving and Working with Others at Higher in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Open learning

Due to the experiential and participatory nature of the content of this Unit, it is not appropriate to be delivered by open learning.

Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Alternative Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs*, which is available on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

General information for candidates

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On completion of the Unit you should be able to:

- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of group process and dynamics within a personal development group
- ◆ Develop and demonstrate self-awareness as a group participant
- ◆ Develop and demonstrate group facilitation skills

You will be assessed by a written assignment for Outcome 1 and by observation of practical groupwork for Outcomes 2 and 3.