

Higher National Unit specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Counselling: Psychodynamic Counselling Theory

Unit code: F1EP 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to provide candidates with an opportunity to consider theoretical concepts underlying psychodynamic counselling theory, as well as considering the historical development, and views/assumptions of the psychodynamic tradition. The Unit also provides an opportunity for candidates to increase self-awareness in relation to course content, as well as to consider important boundary issues.

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

- 1 Explain the development of the psychodynamic tradition of counselling.
- 2 Explain the main theoretical concepts of psychodynamic approaches to counselling.
- 3 Evaluate personal learning in relation to the psychodynamic tradition of counselling.

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: Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, however candidates should have good communication skills.

Core Skills: There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of Communication, Problem Solving and Working with Others at Higher level 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. This Unit forms part of the Group Award for HNC Counselling. This is a mandatory Unit and may be taught alone or in conjunction with Unit *Contemporary Psychodynamic Approaches*.

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.

There are three assessments for this Unit; assignments covering Outcomes 1 and 2 and a personal learning journal which includes a reflective account of practice for Outcome 3.

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

Explain the Development of the Psychodynamic Tradition of Counselling

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Historical development of the psychodynamic tradition
- ◆ Boundary Issues — theoretical competence
- ◆ Importance of theory in relation to competence

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the historical development of the psychodynamic tradition

Assessment Guidelines

Evidence should be generated through written and/or oral assignments of approximately 750 words

Outcome 2

Explain the Main Theoretical Concepts of Psychodynamic Approaches to Counselling

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Main theoretical concepts
- ◆ How psychological/emotional difficulties are acquired and perpetuated from a psychodynamic perspective

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain main the theoretical concepts in Psychoanalysis
- ◆ explain the psychodynamic view of psychological/emotional difficulties, their acquisition and perpetuation

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Assessment Guidelines

Evidence should be generated through written and/or oral assignments of approximately 750 words.

Outcome 3

Evaluate Personal Learning in relation to the Psychodynamic Tradition of Counselling

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Self-awareness and personal growth in relation to course content
- ◆ Self-awareness in relation to relationships through the perspective of theoretical concepts, views/assumptions
- ◆ Actively participate in experiential learning of the Unit

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ reflect and evaluate the impact of the Unit content on self-awareness
- ◆ reflect on and evaluate relationships

Assessment Guidelines

Evidence could be generated through a personal learning journal and a reflective account of approximately 750–1,000 words.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1EP 34

Unit title: Counselling: Psychodynamic Counselling
Theory

Superclass category: PM

Original date of publication: April 2007

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History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

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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

Outcome 1

Major theories include: Psychoanalysis, Analytical Psychology, Individual Psychology, Object Relations, Attachment Theory. Views/assumptions about human nature: influence of the past in the present, behaviour often a consequence of unconscious processes, importance of developmental stages, deterministic, personality structure.

The psychodynamic tradition has many contributors who put emphasis on a theoretical understanding of psycho-social and psycho-sexual developmental stages, intra-personal as well as inter-personal dynamics which includes the repetition of early years of experience in life as well as in the dynamic of the therapeutic encounter. The general therapeutic aim is to help a person live a more autonomous and insightful life. Views/assumptions about human nature, as well as values, bring distinctiveness to the theoretical content of the tradition.

Boundary issue of theoretical competence is key in classical psychodynamic therapies as the power balance is with the counsellor as ‘expert’. The requirement for long training and in-depth analysis for psychodynamic trainees means that this is expensive for counsellors and ultimately clients — which makes it less available than some other therapies. This should be a group exercise where candidates should actively participate, take their own notes and use these for the Graded Unit.

Outcome 2

It is important that classical theoretical concepts are understood in terms of being signposts that provide the counsellor with a theoretical framework which informs counselling practice rather than prescriptive facts that define it. It is also important for candidates to know that therapeutic interventions arise out of theoretical assumptions not facts.

Basic theoretical concepts include: *Psychoanalysis* — unconscious, conscious, pre-conscious, drives/impulses, dream interpretation, free association, libido/aggressive energy, psychosexual development, ego, super-ego, id, psychosexual stages, introjection, projection, defence mechanisms, transference/counter-transference. *Analytical Psychology* — Self, ego, persona, shadow, anima/animus, individuation, archetypes, personal/collective unconscious, dream analysis, active imagination, introversion/extraversion. *Individual Psychology* — Family positions, inferiority/superiority complexes, life style, life goals, social interest. *Object Relations* — The holding environment, containment, ‘good enough mother’, ‘nursing triad’, gratification, envy, jealousy, false self, true self, transitional phenomena, internal/inner objects, splitting, projective identification, depressive/paranoid-schizoid positions, phantasy. *Attachment Theory* — styles of attachment, secure base. *Erik Erikson* — psycho-social development.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Psychodynamic Counselling Theory

It is important that students understand how the theories apply to individuals in order that they can recognise these when working with a client therefore this should be a dimension explored during the learning process. Examples of difficulties, how they are acquired and how they affect functioning with reference to psychodynamic theory should be included.

Outcome 3

Personal development and understanding of how the theories apply to individuals in essential. Candidates should have the opportunity to reflect on the theories in relation to self-awareness and awareness of self in relation to others. Self understanding opportunities in relation to the theories should be offered to candidates using reflective exercises.

The learning journal should allow candidates to map their personal development journey and also to prepare for the Graded Unit. Integration of the theory is unique to each candidate and the aim is to offer each the opportunity to experience this process.

Self awareness is in two parts, candidates must reflect on their personal learning from the course: 'What is this material (concepts, assumptions, values, etc.) helping me to understand about me?' and on their increasing self-awareness in relation to others. Candidates must apply theoretical concepts in their relationship with others to increase self-awareness: 'Through the theoretical perspective of (eg Erikson's Psycho-Social Development) what am I learning about myself in relation to others?'

The concept of Counselling reflects the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

The following texts may be useful:

Core texts

Stephen Palmer (2000) *Introduction to Counselling and Psychotherapy — The Essential Guide*. Sage Publications.

Gerald Corey (1996) *Theory and Practice of Counselling and Psychotherapy*. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Windy Dryden (2002) *A Handbook in Individual Therapy 4th Edition*, Open University Press.

Lavinia Gomez (1997) *An Introduction to Object Relations*. Free Association Books.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Psychodynamic Counselling Theory

Recommended texts

John Bowlby (1993) *The Making & Breaking of Affectional Bonds*. Routledge; Jeremy Holmes (1993) *John Bowlby & Attachment Theory*.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and some of these texts may have been reprinted or may be out of print, but would be available through a library.

Candidates should be actively encouraged to make use of the internet in addition to recommended texts. As addresses change frequently it is difficult to recommend any specific sites but there are ‘institute of’ sites for many of the major theories.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

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

Open learning

This Unit is best offered as a group based activity to facilitate the necessary personal learning and very careful consideration should be given to this before offering it by open or distant learning.

Candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs

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. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

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- ◆ evaluate personal learning in relation to the psychodynamic tradition of counselling

Assessment will take the form of written essays (Outcomes 1 and 2), a written learning journal and continuous active participation in individual and group activities (Outcome 3).