



## Higher National Unit specification: general information

**Unit title:** Counselling Group Experience: Cognitive-Behavioural Approach (CBT)

**Unit code:** H0C1 35

**Superclass:** PM

**Publication date:** April 2017

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 02

### Unit purpose

This Unit is aimed at candidates who want to become counsellors. It would also suit those whose primary role is not counselling but who would like to enhance their practice.

This Unit recognises that counsellors and other professionals do not only work one to one with individuals, they also work with groups. As such this Unit gives candidates an experience of being a member of a group and the opportunity to relate to other group members. The content of the unit is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

The Unit focuses on the theory and practice of group work from a cognitive-behavioural approach [CBT] and therefore emphasises cognitive processes, observable behaviour and problem solving. Also, the focus is on action and behaviour change.

This Unit is an experiential learning opportunity. During delivery for this unit, there will be regular opportunity for participation in Personal Development groups, community groups and ongoing personal reflection. This means that candidates will experience what it is like to be part of a group on a regular and ongoing basis. The group will be the training group to which they belong and will offer the candidates the opportunity to experience some of the techniques involved in a cognitive-behavioural approach to group work. It will also give candidates the opportunity to facilitate such techniques.

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

- 1 Explain the cognitive- behavioural approach to group development and process.
- 2 Review and evaluate own participation in the group.
- 3 Facilitate the group using a cognitive-behavioural approach.

## General information (cont)

### Recommended prior knowledge and skills

It would be beneficial for candidates to have prior knowledge, understanding and practical experience of counselling. This could be demonstrated by possession of the HNC Counselling G8H6 16. The practical experience could be from work experience or simulated practice on a training course. In particular, candidates should have knowledge and understanding of cognitive-behavioural approaches to counselling, this could be evidenced by possession of, eg *Counselling: Behavioural and Cognitive Counselling Theory* (F1EE 34). Ultimately, entry is at the discretion of the centre.

### Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8\*)

*\*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.*

### Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

### 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 HND in Counselling.

There is a degree of flexibility in the delivery of the Unit. Some centres may deliver short sessions on a weekly basis for the duration of the course, whilst others may prefer to offer longer sessions over a shorter period of time. The Unit lends itself to both options.

## 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 cognitive-behavioural approaches to group development and process.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Cognitive-behavioural theory
- ◆ Models of group work from a cognitive-behavioural approach
- ◆ Advantages and disadvantages of using a cognitive-behavioural approach in groups

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain cognitive-behavioural theory.
- ◆ describe models of group work from a cognitive-behavioural approach.
- ◆ evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using a cognitive-behavioural approach in groups.

This evidence will be gathered in open-book conditions at an appropriate point in the Unit.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Counselling Group Experience: Cognitive-Behavioural Approach (CBT)

### **Outcome 2**

Review and evaluate own participation in the group.

#### **Knowledge and/or Skills**

- ◆ Ability to reflect on own contribution to group sessions and relationship with group members and facilitator
- ◆ Willingness to participate in experiential activities
- ◆ Ability to recognise own faulty thinking and distortions and those of other group members

#### **Evidence Requirements**

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

- ◆ identify, acknowledge and express thoughts and feelings in the group.
- ◆ participate in a range of activities.

Evidence in the form of the candidates own reflections on their participation in the group and records of feedback from a minimum of two other members of the group is required for this Outcome.

This evidence will be gathered in open-book conditions at an appropriate point in the Unit.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Counselling Group Experience: Cognitive-Behavioural Approach (CBT)

### Outcome 3

Facilitate the group using a cognitive-behavioural approach.

#### Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Establishing and maintaining boundaries
- ◆ Establishing a collaborative and non-judgemental relationship with group members
- ◆ Opening and ending sessions
- ◆ Encouraging members to examine irrational beliefs and faulty thinking
- ◆ Role play

#### Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ time the session and maintain boundaries.
- ◆ enable others to participate.
- ◆ establish a collaborative and non-judgemental relationship with group members.
- ◆ direct sessions using cognitive- behavioural techniques.

Evidence for this Outcome will be in the form of records of two checklists, one gathered from the whole group and one from the tutor, in relation to candidate's performance in facilitating the group on two occasions.

Evidence will be gathered under open-book conditions at an appropriate point in the Unit.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes**

**Unit title:** Counselling Group Experience: Cognitive-Behavioural Approach (CBT)

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**

This Unit is aimed at candidates who want to become counsellors or those whose primary role is not counselling, who would like however, to enhance their practice.

This Unit recognises that counsellors and other professionals do not only work one to one with individuals, they also work with groups. As such this Unit gives candidates an experience of being a member of a group and the opportunity to relate to other group members. The process of therapeutic change within the cognitive behavioural school of counselling should underpin the context and delivery of this unit

The Unit focuses on the theory and practice of group work from a cognitive-behavioural approach [CBT].

This Unit is an experiential learning opportunity. This means that candidates will experience what it is like to be part of a group on a regular and ongoing basis. The group will be the training group to which they belong.

### **Guidance on the delivery of this Unit**

Candidates will meet as a group on a regular basis and in time when trust develops they will relate to each other openly and honestly. It is a challenging learning experience and a supportive learning environment is important. Some input on cognitive-behavioural theories relating to group processes would be appropriate to start the Unit. There is opportunity for the delivery and/or assessment of this unit to be integrated with F1EF 35 - Contemporary Cognitive Behavioural Counselling Theory

### **Guidance on the assessment of this Unit**

Candidates will demonstrate their understanding of the cognitive-behavioural approach to group work by, eg giving a presentation, relating theory to practice.

Candidates will demonstrate their ability to participate in the group using a cognitive-behavioural approach by reflection on self and gathering feedback from other group members.

Candidates will demonstrate their ability to facilitate the group using a cognitive-behavioural approach gathering feedback from other group members.

## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

**Unit title:** Counselling Group Experience: Cognitive-Behavioural Approach (CBT)

### Assessment Guidelines

#### Outcome 1

Explain the cognitive-behavioural approaches to group development and process.

The candidate will relate the theory of group development and process from a cognitive-behavioural approach to their experiences and observations of the dynamics in the training group.

Evidence could be in the form of a written, oral or signed presentation, lasting approximately 10 minutes and observed by the tutor using an appropriate observation checklist.

#### Outcome 2

Review and evaluate own participation in the group.

The candidates own reflection could include detailed personal Johari windows at the beginning, middle and end of the group's life. Feedback from a minimum of two peers in the group should include observation and comment on how the candidate related to other members, the group facilitator and also how they participated in group activities.

#### Outcome 3

Facilitate the group using a cognitive-behavioural approach.

The evidence for this Outcome will be in the form of records of two checklists, one gathered from the whole group and one from the tutor, in relation to candidate's performance in facilitating the group on two occasions.

It is recommended that the checklists are based on the candidate's performance in facilitating a group session lasting approximately 30 minutes

### Online and Distance Learning

This Unit is not suitable for online or distance learning as it is an experiential learning experience of relating to others in a group setting.

### Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There will be opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills of *Communication*, *ICT* and *Working with Others*, all at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components. It can also support the development of other transferable skills, such as, essay/report writing and thinking, analytical and critical skills.

## **Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)**

**Unit title:** Counselling Group Experience: Cognitive-Behavioural Approach (CBT)

### **Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs**

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website [www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements](http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements)



## History of changes to Unit

| Version | Description of change  | Date       |
|---------|--|------------|
| 02      | Additional information added to clarify the unit content, context and delivery is underpinned by the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling | 26/04/2017 |
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## General information for candidates

### **Unit title:** Counselling Group Experience: Cognitive-Behavioural Approach (CBT)

This Unit is suitable for you if you are aiming to become a counsellor, or if your primary role is not counselling but you work with people and would like to enhance your knowledge and understanding of counselling.

This Unit recognises that counsellors and other professionals do not only work one to one with individuals, they also work with groups. As such this Unit gives you an experience of being a member of a group and having the opportunity to relate to other group members.

The Unit focuses on the theory and practice of group work from cognitive-behavioural approaches.

This Unit is an experiential learning opportunity. This means that you will experience what it is like to be part of a group on a regular and ongoing basis. The group will be the training group to which you belong and the group members will be your colleagues on the course.

You should have some prior knowledge, understanding and practical experience of counselling. This could be demonstrated by possession of the HNC Counselling (or equivalent). The practical experience could be from work experience or simulated practice on a training course. In particular, you should have knowledge and understanding of cognitive- behavioural approaches to counselling.

There are three Outcomes in this Unit.

- 1 Explain the cognitive- behavioural approach to group development and process.
- 2 Review and evaluate own participation in the group.
- 3 Facilitate the group using a cognitive-behavioural approach.

The group experience is challenging and often not an easy one. It is, however, an opportunity to experience personal relationships at a fairly intense level and an experience which has enormous potential for personal development.

There will be opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills of *Communication*, *ICT* and *Working with Others* in this Unit.

It can also support the development of other transferable skills such as essay/report writing and your thinking, analytical and critical skills.