



Higher National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Online Therapeutic Support for Pregnancy Loss
(SCQF level 8)

Unit code: H8X1 35

Superclass: PP

Publication date: February 2015

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 02

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to provide the specialist skills and knowledge required to provide online therapeutic support to women who have suffered a miscarriage or are at risk of miscarriage. The Unit is aimed at those who have experience, in a paid or voluntary capacity, in a role providing advice and guidance on fertility management.

This Unit is mandatory within the Professional Development Award in Providing Advanced Fertility Support at SCQF level 8 but can also be taken as a stand-alone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development (CPD).

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Investigate the range and evaluate the benefits of online therapeutic support for clients.
- 2 Explain the importance of Client Assessment and Client Agreement.
- 3 Provide appropriate online therapeutic support to clients.
- 4 Evaluate the Outcome of therapeutic support provided to clients.

Credit points and level

2 Higher National Unit credits at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8)

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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Recommended entry to the Unit

Entry to the Unit is at the discretion of the centre however it is strongly recommended that learners wishing to undertake this Unit have previously achieved national qualifications in Advice and Guidance and/or Counselling, eg:

- ◆ HN Unit, *Pregnancy Loss and Bereavement, Supporting Clients Using a Range of Media*
- ◆ SVQ Units in Advice and Guidance
- ◆ HN Units in Counselling

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skills	Problem Solving at SCQF Level 6
Core Skill component	None

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit Specification.

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.

The Unit forms part of the PDA in Providing Advanced Fertility Support at SCQF level 8 but can also be taken as a standalone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of CPD.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

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. Learners 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

Investigate the range and evaluate the benefits of online therapeutic support for clients.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Range of appropriate online therapeutic support available to clients
- ◆ Benefits of online therapeutic support to clients and advisors
- ◆ Relevant legislation, codes of practice and ethical guidelines
- ◆ Organisational policies and procedures surrounding offering support to clients online

Outcome 2

Explain the importance of Client Assessment and Client Agreement.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Client Assessment process
- ◆ Range of Outcomes and actions resulting from the Client Assessment
- ◆ Client Agreement process (Client Contract)

Outcome 3

Provide appropriate online therapeutic support to clients.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Range of client needs
- ◆ Selection of appropriate online therapeutic support for clients
- ◆ Online therapeutic support in practice

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 4

Evaluate the Outcome of online therapeutic support provided to clients.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Evaluation of online therapeutic support given to client
- ◆ Principles underpinning personal and professional development and reflective practice
- ◆ Skills and knowledge required to practice effectively
- ◆ Reflection on own practice
- ◆ Personal development planning

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can:

Outcome 1

Learners will investigate:

- ◆ the range of online therapeutic support that is available for clients within their own organisation.
- ◆ the typical needs of clients.
- ◆ the legislation, codes of practice and ethical guidelines that govern the provision of online advice and guidance services.
- ◆ the policies and procedures to be followed within own organisation.

Learners will evaluate:

- ◆ the benefits of online therapeutic support for clients and the advisor.

Outcome 2

Learners will explain:

- ◆ the importance of conducting a formal Client Assessment and what should be contained within the Assessment.
- ◆ Importance of empowerment of the client regarding personal choices.
- ◆ the range of possible Outcomes and actions resulting from a Client Assessment.
- ◆ Setting of boundaries.
- ◆ the importance of negotiating a formal Client Agreement and what should be contained within the Agreement.

Learners will demonstrate:

- ◆ negotiation of a client contract.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 3

Learners will:

- ◆ explain the typical needs and/or issues their clients may present with.
- ◆ select and provide appropriate support to a minimum of three clients in line with their Client Assessment and Agreement:
 - one client who will be recommended for referral
 - two clients who will be provided with online therapeutic support.

Outcome 4

Learners will:

- ◆ provide an evaluation of the online therapeutic support offered to a minimum of one client, taking into account timescales from initial client contact to completion of treatment, how the online therapeutic treatment was in-line with the Client Assessment and Agreement and how the therapeutic support met the client's needs.
- ◆ reflect upon their own practice in relation to the same client's support and therapy, identifying areas of strength in their own practice and areas requiring further professional development.

Care must be taken to respect the confidentiality and privacy of clients, therefore workplace evidence must be anonymised.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

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Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit has been designed to provide learners with the knowledge and skills required to offer online therapeutic support to women who have had or are at risk of, suffering a miscarriage.

It is most suited to those who already have experience in counselling and/or offering advice and guidance and will add to their existing competences.

Outcome 1 is an investigation into the different methods of online therapeutic support and learners will explain why offering online support has benefits both to the client and the advisor.

Methods include:

- ◆ Therapeutic e-mail exchange
- ◆ Live Chat (eg Skype)
- ◆ Texting
- ◆ Social and Professional Media, eg Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter, message boards

Learners should examine the range of needs their clients present with which may include:

- ◆ Bereavement
- ◆ Relationship difficulties
- ◆ Medical issues (requires referral to medical profession)
- ◆ Pregnancy following loss
- ◆ General information on miscarriage

The benefits of offering on-line support to clients and advisors can include:

- ◆ Flexibility
- ◆ Cost-effective
- ◆ Time-effective
- ◆ Accessibility (including to specialist therapy)

Awareness of relevant legislation must be covered, such as the:

- ◆ Data Protection Act
- ◆ Equality Act
- ◆ Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act (PVG)

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Codes of practice, guidelines and ethical requirements, organisational policies and procedures will include:

- ◆ Ethical codes of practice (including professional boundaries)
- ◆ Safe use of the internet
- ◆ Client care
- ◆ Complaints procedure
- ◆ Communication protocols appropriate to method used

Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 have a practical focus so therefore evidence can be gleaned from practice with a minimum of three different clients.

Client Assessment and the Client Agreement (also known as the Client Contract) are a vital part of the therapeutic support process. Whether online or face to face, the Client Assessment and Client Agreement will be very similar and the learner must know what information should be included and importantly, why.

One difference is that practical arrangements around online therapeutic support can take longer to negotiate and this includes guidance for dealing with technological difficulties.

The initial Client Assessment can result in a number of Outcomes, eg:

- ◆ Referral: to a more appropriate support service/specialist (eg GP, Hospital, Information/Counselling Service, Early Pregnancy Unit, Family Planning Service)
- ◆ Recommended Type of Support: Face-to-Face Counselling, therapeutic e-mail exchange, Live Chat (eg Skype)
- ◆ Additional Methods of Support: Texting, Telephone, Professional and Social Media (facebook, WhatsApp, twitter, message boards)

Learners will develop as reflective practitioners through their evaluation and review of practice in Outcomes 2, 3 and 4. The learner should be given the time and the opportunity to provide online therapeutic support, in line with the Client Agreement to three different clients who have presented with different needs.

Aspects to be considered within evaluation and reflection are:

- ◆ Listening and questioning skills (showing interest, being proactive)
- ◆ Speaking skills (tone, pace, adapting language and terminology)
- ◆ Convenience for clients
- ◆ Opportunities for immediate feedback and/or clarification
- ◆ Identification of client uncertainties
- ◆ Interaction between advisor and client
- ◆ Opportunities to adapt questioning (subtle or direct)
- ◆ Effectiveness of online communication
- ◆ Relationship building
- ◆ Organisational reputation

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- ◆ Confidentiality and privacy
- ◆ Valuing the client
- ◆ Conflict resolution/defusing more difficult situations
- ◆ Time management
- ◆ Referral

Additionally, specific aspects will be covered:

- ◆ through role play practice, explore possible client responses in line with organisational policy and client-centred practice.
- ◆ internet safety awareness.

The value of self-reflection to improving their own performance and therefore the service provided to clients should be covered with learners.

The use of peer review (in the form of observation) and formal performance evaluations can inform identification of personal strengths and areas requiring further professional development.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

The Unit should be taught and assessed in the order presented. Outcome 1 provides underpinning knowledge to carry forward to the practical Outcomes 2, 3 and 4. Centres should use a learner-centred, participative and practical approach to learning and teaching.

Outcome 1 can be delivered via classroom or online lessons and also provides opportunities for shared learning through group discussions around organisational practices.

Outcome 2 can be taught using appropriate case-studies and role-play covering different clients and different needs, prior to actual observed practice being undertaken.

Outcome 3 again offers the opportunity for role-play based on case studies, prior to actual practice with clients.

Outcome 3; Learners will develop as reflective practitioners and utilise appropriate methods of evaluation in order to identify areas for professional development and where applicable, improvements to the support provided.

Learners may find the following publications helpful. The references given are correct at the time of publication however centres should ensure that learners have access to current reference materials.

Derrig-Palumbo, K. And Zeine, F. (2005) *Online therapy: A Therapist's Guide to Expanding Your Practice*. W.W. Norton & Co.

Evans, J. (2009) *Online Counselling and Guidance Skills: A Resource for Trainees and Practitioners*. London: Sage Publications.

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Hsiung, C. (2002) *E-Therapy: Case Studies, Guiding Principles and the Clinical Potential Of The Internet*. Norton

Jones, G. And Stokes, A. (2009) *Online Counselling: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kraus, R., Zack, J.S. and Stricker, G. (2004) *Online Counseling: A Handbook For Mental Health Professionals*. Academic Press.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

The Outcomes should be taught and assessed in the order presented.

For Outcome 1, the learner may present their investigation in the form of a report, based on their own organisation or on a case study provided by the centre.

There are opportunities to assess Outcomes 2, 3 and 4 together. The learner can compile a portfolio of evidence over an agreed period of time, to meet the Evidence Requirements, containing Client Assessments and Agreements, personal and reflective accounts based on their practice, observation checklists on actual work-practice, carried out and completed by appropriately experienced and qualified staff, relevant client records and a Professional Personal Development Plan (PDP).

The use of workplace observation will also authenticate the learner's work.

Care must be taken to respect the confidentiality and privacy of clients, therefore workplace evidence must be anonymised.

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit, particularly Outcomes 1 and 4. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

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Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

This Unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it. This means that when candidates achieve the Unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show that they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF level 6.

There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit as follows; *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6, *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5, *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and *Numeracy* at SCQF level 5.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF Level 6 embedded.	26/05/15

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General information for learners

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This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit is particularly suitable for you if you are already working or volunteering in an environment that provides advice and guidance or a counselling service to women who have suffered, or are at risk of suffering a miscarriage.

The Unit forms part of the Professional Development Award in Providing Advanced Fertility Support at SCQF level 8 but can also be taken as a stand-alone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of your continued professional development.

The Unit has four Outcomes:

- ◆ Investigate the range and evaluate the benefits of online therapeutic support for clients.
- ◆ Explain the importance of Client Assessment and Client Agreement.
- ◆ Provide appropriate online therapeutic support to clients.
- ◆ Evaluate the Outcome of therapeutic support provided to clients.

During the Unit, you will take part in role play to give you the experience and knowledge to plan, deliver and evaluate online therapeutic support in actual practice.

As well as evaluating the online therapeutic support you'll be asked to reflect upon your own practice and identify areas for future self-development.

Assessments will take place at times agreed with your delivering centre. You may be asked to produce a report on the range and benefits of online therapeutic support and develop a portfolio of evidence that reflects your practice with clients. This will include Client Assessments and Agreements, observations of your practice, personal reflective accounts and an evaluation report.

You will have the opportunity to develop your Core Skills in *Communication, Problem Solving, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Numeracy and Working with Others* as well as transferable and soft skills in Planning, Evaluating, Negotiation, Assertiveness and Team Working