



Higher National Unit Specification

General information for centres

Unit title: Counselling: Loss, Grief and Bereavement in a Counselling Context

Unit code: F1EM 34

Unit purpose: This Unit is designed to develop understanding of theoretical models and highlight necessary skills in the practice of loss and grief counselling. During delivery for this unit, there will be regular opportunity for practice observation, feedback, discussion and review. The unit content is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

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

- 1 Describe the process of loss with reference to theoretical models.
- 2 Understand the importance of ritual and experiential activity.
- 3 Counsel clients experiencing different types of loss.
- 4 Demonstrate personal learning.

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 the 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 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.

Outcomes 1 and 2 are assessed by extended response assignment. Outcome 3 is assessed by practical demonstration and Outcome 4 by reflective accounts.

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

Describe the process of loss with reference to theoretical models

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Cultural practices and attitudes towards bereavement
- ◆ Types of loss
- ◆ Theoretical models applicable to issues surrounding loss
- ◆ Complicated grief reactions

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe contemporary cultural practices and attitudes towards bereavement
- ◆ identify different types of loss which clients may experience
- ◆ describe theoretical models of loss and grief processes
- ◆ recognise and understand complicated grief reactions

Assessment guidelines

Evidence should be generated through an extended response assignment.

Outcome 2

Understand the importance of ritual and experiential activity

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Recognition of importance of ritual and experiential activity
- ◆ Acknowledgment of cultural diversity behind choices
- ◆ Understanding of experiential activity

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Loss, Grief and Bereavement in a Counselling Context

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ explain the importance of ritual
- ◆ identify cultural traditions behind practice of appropriate experiential activities
- ◆ discuss choices surrounding appropriate experiential activities

Assessment guidelines

Evidence should be generated through an extended response assignment.

Outcome 3

Counsel clients experiencing different types of loss

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Identification of signs of loss and/or grief
- ◆ Effective application of counselling skills
- ◆ Management of counselling relationship
- ◆ Ability to deal with emotions

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ identify the signs of grief or loss clients may exhibit
- ◆ apply effective and justified counselling skills with a client who is experiencing loss
- ◆ manage an effective counselling relationship
- ◆ demonstrate an ability to work with clients demonstrating challenging emotions

Assessment guidelines

Observation of candidate in role of client recorded using an observation checklist. There is an opportunity for this Outcome to be integrated within Counselling: Relationship-Centred Counselling Skills: Stages 1, 2 or 3 Of The Three-Stage Integrative Model.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Loss, Grief and Bereavement in a Counselling Context

Outcome 4

Demonstrate personal learning

Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Self awareness with regard to experiencing loss
- ◆ Increased awareness of client's, friend's, family and course member's reactions to loss

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can write evidence in the form of reflective accounts covering:

- ◆ understanding own experience of loss in relation to major theories
- ◆ cultural considerations and impact on future practice
- ◆ knowledge/skills gained
- ◆ insights into relationships and reactions to loss

Assessment guidelines

Written a reflective account covering each Evidence Requirement. This may be integrated into a course journal if one is being kept.

Administrative Information

Unit code: F1EM 34

Unit title: Counselling: Loss, Grief and Bereavement in a Counselling Context

Superclass category: PP

Date of publication: April 2007

Version: 03

History of changes:

Version	Description of change	Date
03	Minor amendment of Unit purpose, clarification of guidance (d)	23/03/2017
02	Outcome 1, clarification of terminology to include Cultural Practices.	15/04/13

Source: SQA

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Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Counselling: Loss, Grief and Bereavement in a Counselling Context

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 specialist Unit is intended for those preparing to work or already working in counselling and is designed to allow candidates to consolidate and apply knowledge and understanding that underpins counselling clients experiencing loss, grief or bereavement. In order to achieve the Outcomes stated, this Unit requires that the student take notes in lectures and discussions, compile assessments, read relevant books and articles as advised, watch relevant videos and take part in and contribute to group discussions and exercises.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Outcome 1

Outcome 1 identifies the process of loss with reference to theoretical models.

- (a) Cultural practices can include three from:
Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Secular Humanism, Sikhism.
- (b) Types of loss could include:
death of partner, friend, child, cot-death, still birth, miscarriage, termination of pregnancy, having child with disability, rape, suicide, terminal illness, long-term illness, loss of limb, hearing, eyesight, bodily function, hair, appearance, marriage, divorce, separation, unemployment, redundancy, retirement, change of house, school, job, theft, children growing up, leaving home, becoming parents, becoming grandparents, unable to have child, loss of innocence, security, faith, trust, dignity, virginity, loss of income, death of a pet, unexpected death, anticipated death.
- (c) Theoretical models might include:
E. Kubler-Ross; C.M. Parkes; W. Worden; J. Bowlby.
- (d) Complicated grief reactions and the impact these can have on the therapeutic process to include:
Chronic grief reaction; delayed grief reaction; exaggerated grief reaction; masked grief responses; absent grief; unbalanced grief.

Outcome 2

Outcome 2 introduces appropriate ways of enabling clients to work through the experience of loss.

- (a) Importance of rituals addresses individual's needs at three levels:
Psychological — by giving framework for the expression of grief.
Theological or psychological — individual seeks to make meaning out of what is experienced.
Sociological — through sharing experience with others and being re-accepted into society.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Loss, Grief and Bereavement in a Counselling Context

- (b) Appropriate experiential activities might include:
Completing unfinished business, planting a tree etc., writing letters to lost one, speaking to 'empty chair' or any other activities appropriate within societies. These are to be viewed in cultural context.

Outcome 3

Outcome 3 is designed to allow candidates to put theory into practice. Safety of students is paramount so it is important to stress that simulation/role-play is acceptable here. The following should be covered:

- (a) Inner feeling of loss, outer expression of grief.
- (b) Core conditions, challenging, immediacy, advanced empathy, reflecting, paraphrasing, summarising, open questioning, responding to silence, focusing, moving session forward, maintaining eye contact, appropriate body language, responding to non-verbal clues, comfort with emotional instability.
- (c) Possible reactions to loss: shock, protest, disorganisation, numbness, denial, disbelief, sadness, anger, bitterness, guilt, fear, relief, yearning, searching, preoccupation, physical symptoms, confusion, loss of interest, loss of meaning, loss of faith, restlessness, loss of confidence, low self-esteem, anguish, depression, anxiety, loneliness, difficulties in concentration, inappropriate use of alcohol, drugs, disturbed sleep pattern, altered appetite.

Outcome 4

Outcome 4 gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their personal learning and apply the counselling concepts to their relationships. This may be integrated into a course journal if one is being kept. The following should be considered:

Self awareness with regard to experiencing loss, increased awareness of client's, friend's, family and course member's reactions to loss, comfort/discomfort working with strong emotions.

Key texts:

E Kubler-Ross
On Death and Dying
ISBN 0684839385

B Raphael
An Anatomy of Bereavement
ISBN 0415094542

Katz & Sidell
Easeful Death
ISBN 0340595140

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling: Loss, Grief and Bereavement in a Counselling Context

C Curren
Responding to Grief
ISBN 0333736397

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 participatory and experiential nature and practical element in this Unit, it would not be appropriate for open learning.

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.

General information for candidates

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- ◆ Counsel clients experiencing different types of loss
- ◆ Demonstrate personal learning

You will be assessed in this Unit by extended response questions for Outcomes 1 and 2, by observation of practical activity for Outcome 3 and by a reflective account for Outcome 4.