



## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information

**Unit title:** Counselling: Psychopathology for Counsellors  
(SCQF level 8)

**Unit code:** HL9P 35

**Superclass:** PS

**Publication date:** May 2017

**Source:** Scottish Qualifications Authority

**Version:** 01

### Unit purpose

This unit is designed to enable learners to develop an understanding of basic concepts and procedures in psychopathology and introduces students to the concept of a continuum of mental wellbeing through to severe psychological and emotional distress.

The content of this Unit is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

### Outcomes

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

- 1 Define the concept of psychopathology.
- 2 Describe the applications of individual, group and community intervention in the treatment of psychopathology.
- 3 Describe major disorders and identify main elements in treatment.
- 4 Explain legal and ethical issues in abnormal psychology for counsellors.

### Credit points and level

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

### Recommended entry to the unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre.

## **Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)**

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### **Core Skills**

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the support notes for 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 is mandatory within the HND in Counselling.

### **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](http://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

Define the concept of psychopathology.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Definition of psychopathology
- ◆ Abnormal behaviour in terms of historical perspectives
- ◆ Key professions within the mental health field relevant to current practice
- ◆ Major models of psychopathology
- ◆ Assessment and classification of abnormal behaviour

### Outcome 2

Describe the applications of individual, group and community intervention in the treatment of psychopathology.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Biology-based treatment techniques for abnormal behaviour
- ◆ Range of psychotherapeutic approaches to individual psychopathology
- ◆ Action-orientated approaches to individual psychotherapy
- ◆ Family and group therapy in terms of popular practice
- ◆ Community facilities for the prevention and treatment of psychopathology

### Outcome 3

Describe major disorders and identify main elements in treatment.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Anxiety based disorders in terms of aetiology, diagnosis and treatment
- ◆ Condition and management of stress
- ◆ Disorders involving conduct, in terms of aetiology, diagnosis and treatment
- ◆ Severe disorders of mood and thought in terms of aetiology, diagnosis and treatment
- ◆ Disorders of childhood and adolescence in terms of aetiology, diagnosis and treatment
- ◆ Medication, effects, side effects and their possible impact on therapeutic process

## Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

**Unit title:** Counselling: Psychopathology for Counsellors  
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### Outcome 4

Explain legal and ethical issues in abnormal psychology for counsellors.

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Relevant sections of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act (2003)
- ◆ Relevant sections of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995
- ◆ Ethical issues relating to counsellors and clients
- ◆ Main approaches to therapy in terms of their differing ethical implications

#### 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:

- ◆ clearly define the term 'psychopathology'.
- ◆ explain abnormal behaviour in terms of historical perspectives.
- ◆ identify three key professions within the mental health field who are relevant to current counselling practice.
- ◆ identify the major models of psychopathology.
- ◆ explain the assessment and classification of abnormal behaviour.
- ◆ define biology-based treatment techniques for abnormal behaviour.
- ◆ compare and contrast three different psychotherapeutic approaches to individual psychopathology.
- ◆ describe two action-orientated approaches to individual psychotherapy.
- ◆ explain the difference between family and group therapy in terms of popular practice.
- ◆ identify three community facilities for the prevention and treatment of psychopathology.
- ◆ describe three anxiety based disorders in terms of aetiology, diagnosis and treatment.
- ◆ describe the condition and management of stress.
- ◆ describe three disorders involving conduct, in terms of aetiology, diagnosis and treatment.
- ◆ describe three severe disorders of mood and thought in terms of aetiology, diagnosis and treatment.
- ◆ describe mood disorders of childhood and adolescence in terms of aetiology, diagnosis and treatment.
- ◆ describe the effects, side effects and the possible impact of three commonly prescribed medications on the therapeutic process.
- ◆ identify appropriate relevant sections of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act (2003).
- ◆ identify relevant sections of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995.
- ◆ describe ethical issues relating to counsellors and clients.
- ◆ compare the main approaches to therapy in terms of their differing ethical implications.

Holistic assessment of this unit is recommended.



## Higher National Unit Support Notes

**Unit title:** Counselling: Psychopathology for Counsellors  
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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 40 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this unit

This specialist unit is designed to allow learners to build up a knowledge and understanding of psychopathology that is relevant to counselling practice.

Outcome 1 introduces the concept of psychopathology and the following should provide context.

- (a) Psychopathology: the branch of medicine dealing with the causes and processes of mental disorders.
- (b) Historical perspectives: historical model (role of church, poor laws, possession) disease model.
- (c) Key professionals: psychiatrist, psychologist, general practitioner, psychiatric nurse, community psychiatric nurse, occupational therapist, support worker/skilled listener, counsellor, psychotherapist.
- (d) Major models of psychopathology: biogenic, psychodynamic, humanistic, behavioural/cognitive/ biopsychosocial.
- (e) Classification of abnormal behaviour: ICD-10, DSM IV-TR, assessment: observations, interviews, psychological tests, neurological tests.

Outcome 2 introduces the applications of individual, group and community intervention in the treatment of psychopathology:

- (a) Biology-based treatment techniques: electroconvulsive therapy, psychosurgery, drug therapy.
- (b) Psychotherapeutic approaches: psychodynamic, humanistic, existential.
- (c) Action-orientated approaches: behaviour, cognitive.
- (d) Family and group therapy: individual developing consensus with group, strangers compared to family, confidentiality issues, impact of sharing of experience.
- (e) Community facilities: hospitals, community health centres, prevention programmes, support groups, self-help groups, therapeutic communities.

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Outcome 3 is designed to allow learners to describe major disorders and identify main elements in treatment.

- (a) Anxiety based: anxiety disorders, dissociative disorders. Treatments may include: drug therapy, counselling, CBT.
- (b) Condition and management of stress: signs, symptoms, current treatments: relaxation therapy, CBT, counselling.
- (c) Disorders involving conduct: personality disorders, disorders of impulse control, substance-related disorders, gender identity disorders. Treatments may include: group therapy, individual counselling, CBT, psychoanalysis, occasionally antidepressants (SSRIs).
- (d) Severe disorders of mood and thought: depressive disorders, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia. Treatments include: antidepressants, mood stabilisers, anti-psychotics, dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), CBT.
- (e) Disorders of childhood and adolescence: autistic disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder, disruptive behaviour disorders, separation anxiety disorder, childhood depression, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa. Treatments may include: CBT, buddy systems, drug therapy, family therapy.
- (g) Antidepressants, antipsychotics, mood stabilisers, hypnotics, minor tranquilisers e.g. Benzodiazepines.

Outcome 4 gives learners the opportunity to explain legal and ethical issues in abnormal psychology for counsellors.

- (a) Relevant sections of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act (1995):
- (b) Ethical issues: the insanity defence, competency to stand trial, criteria for compulsory treatment order, denial of civil liberties, patients' rights, patients' charter, user involvement, deinstitutionalisation, effects of labelling, confidentiality, privileged communication and the duty-to-warn principle, advocacy, social stigma of mental illness.
- (c) Main approaches to therapy in terms of differing ethical implications.

### Recommended texts:

Introduction to Psychopathology By Alessandra Lemma

Mental Illness by Marie L. Thompson

Psychopathology: Foundations for A Contemporary Understanding by James E. Maddux, Barbara A. Winstead

Dsm-Iv-Tr Guidebook by Michael B. First, Allen Frances, Harold Alan Pincus

## Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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### Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

This unit requires teaching of mental illness and mental wellbeing therefore it is recommended that teaching staff hold a qualification in mental health. Learners should have access to current published counselling research in this area. Links should be established between theory and practice throughout and the expectation is that the learner demonstrates a thorough understanding of each outcome of the unit. Lectures and group discussions should be supported by relevant periodicals and professional journals.

### 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.

This unit should be holistically assessed by a single instrument of assessment covering the unit outcomes. This will take the form of one open book report of 2,000 to 2,500 words covering all evidence requirements.

- ◆ The report must contain evidence of all aspects of the knowledge and skills sections for Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- ◆ Reference must be made throughout to current literature as appropriate to the unit level.

### Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit. 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](http://www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment).

### Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There are opportunities throughout this unit to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* (Reading, Writing and Oral) at SCQF level 6, *Numeracy* (using number and using graphical information) at SCQF level 6, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* (Accessing/Providing/Creating Information) at SCQF level 6 and *Problem Solving* (Critical Thinking, Planning and Organising, Reviewing and Evaluating) at SCQF level 6.

## History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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## General information for learners

### **Unit title:** Counselling: Psychopathology for Counsellors (SCQF level 8)

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 designed to enable you to develop an understanding of basic concepts and procedures in psychopathology and introduces you to the concept of a continuum of mental wellbeing through to severe psychological and emotional distress. The content of this unit is underpinned by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

This unit is mandatory within the HND in Counselling.

You will complete four outcomes;

- 1 Define the concept of psychopathology.
- 2 Describe the applications of individual, group and community intervention in the treatment of psychopathology.
- 3 Describe major disorders and identify main elements in treatment.
- 4 Explain legal and ethical issues in abnormal psychology for counsellors.

- 1 Define the concept of psychopathology.
- 2 Describe the applications of individual, group and community intervention in the treatment of psychopathology.
- 3 Describe major disorders and identify main elements in treatment.
- 4 Explain legal and ethical issues in abnormal psychology for counsellors.

Assessment will likely be by the production of a report of 2,000–2,500 words to cover all the evidence requirements.

During the unit you will also develop your Core Skills in *Communication*, *Numeracy*, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Problem Solving*.