



National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

Unit code: HE1A 46

Superclass: PM

Publication date: May 2016

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit has been designed for learners who have no previous experience of counselling. The Unit will introduce learners to the main theoretical schools of counselling and the historical development of each. Learners will investigate the Psychodynamic, Humanistic and Cognitive Behavioural Schools of Counselling and the role of the counsellor using each approach. This is a free-standing Unit which provides learners with required underpinning knowledge of the subject.

The 'concept' of counselling reflects the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

NB: It does not in any way permit those who have achieved it to refer to themselves as qualified counsellors.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Investigate the Psychodynamic School of Counselling.
- 2 Investigate the Cognitive Behavioural School of Counselling.
- 3 Investigate the Humanistic School of Counselling.
- 4 Describe personal understanding and insight gained through practical demonstration of one theory.

National Unit specification: General information (cont)

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

Credit points and level

2 National Unit credits at SCQF level 6: (12 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6)

Recommended entry to the Unit

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. It would be beneficial to learners if they had completed the Unit H2XN 11 *Counselling: An introduction* which introduces the learner to the purposes of counselling and the skills required of the role.

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.

The Assessment Support Pack (ASP) for this unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the ASP to ensure a comparable standard. A list of existing ASPs is available to download from SQA's website (<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/46233.2769.html>).

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.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

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.

Outcome 1

Investigate the Psychodynamic School of Counselling.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the Psychodynamic Approach.
- (b) Outline the historical development the Psychodynamic Approach.
- (c) Explain the role of the counsellor in the Psychodynamic Approach.

Outcome 2

Investigate the Cognitive Behavioural School of Counselling.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the Cognitive Behavioural Approach.
- (b) Outline the historical development the Cognitive Behavioural Approach.
- (c) Explain the role of the counsellor in the Cognitive Behavioural Approach.

Outcome 3

Investigate the Humanistic School of Counselling.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the Humanistic Approach.
- (b) Outline the historical development the Humanistic Approach.
- (c) Explain the role of the counsellor in the Humanistic Approach.

Outcome 4

Describe personal understanding and insight gained through practical demonstration of one theory.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Effectively apply a range of counselling skills using one of the following approaches:
 - ◆ Psychodynamic
 - ◆ Cognitive Behavioural
 - ◆ Humanistic
- (b) Reflect honestly on own performance and gain feedback from tutors and peers.
- (c) Accurately identify personal strengths and areas requiring further development.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Given the nature of this Unit, the importance of maintaining confidentiality and responsibilities relating to disclosure and safeguarding on issues emerging should be stressed to learners.

Evidence for Outcome 1, 2 and 3 may be holistically assessed. Information may be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit. Evidence could be gathered in a learner folio.

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3

Learners will investigate three schools of counselling; Psychodynamic, Cognitive Behavioural and Humanistic and the role of the counsellor in each approach.

Learners are required to:

- ◆ describe the Psychodynamic, Cognitive Behavioural and Humanistic Approaches.
- ◆ outline the historical development of each of the three schools.
- ◆ explain the role of the counsellor in each of the three schools.

Outcome 4

Learners are required to:

- ◆ participate in a 15 minute simulated counselling session using one of the following approaches:
 - Psychodynamic
 - Cognitive Behavioural
 - Humanistic
- ◆ demonstrate the use of appropriate counselling skills.
- ◆ describe the knowledge and insight gained from the counselling session.
- ◆ using feedback from tutors and peers, identify areas of personal strength and areas requiring further development.



National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

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 60 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit has been designed for learners who have little or no previous experience of counselling. The Unit will introduce learners to the main theoretical schools of counselling and the historical development of each. Learners will investigate the Psychodynamic, Humanistic and Cognitive Behavioural Schools of Counselling and the role of the counsellor using each approach.

This is a freestanding Unit which has been developed to provide underpinning knowledge of the subject.

It is important to emphasise that achievement of this Unit does not in any way permit those who have achieved it to refer to themselves as qualified counsellors. It does not offer entry to the Professional Register.

The 'concept' of counselling reflects the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling. Learners should adhere to a nationally recognised professional ethical framework

Given the nature of this Unit, the importance of maintaining confidentiality and responsibilities relating to disclosure and safeguarding on issues emerging during practical sessions should be stressed to learners.

A school of counselling is a grouping of different theoretical approaches that are similar to one another in terms of certain important characteristics that distinguish them from theoretical approaches in other counselling schools. The three main schools influencing contemporary individual counselling and psychotherapy practice are:

- ◆ Psychodynamic school
- ◆ Humanistic school
- ◆ Cognitive Behavioural school

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

Outcome 1

Psychodynamic school

Psychodynamic counselling evolved from the work of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). Freud's work investigated the unconscious mind in order to understand his patients and assist in their healing.

Psychodynamic counselling is based on Freud's idea that true knowledge of people and their problems is possible through an understanding of particular areas of the human mind, these areas are:

- ◆ The Conscious — things that we are aware of, these could be feelings or emotions, anger, sadness, grief, delight, surprise, happiness, etc.
- ◆ The Subconscious — these are things that are below our conscious awareness but fairly easily accessible. For example with appropriate questioning a past event which a client had forgotten about may be brought back into the conscious mind.
- ◆ The Unconscious — is the area of the mind where memories have been suppressed and is usually very difficult to access. Such memories may include extremely traumatic events that have been blocked off and require a highly skilled practitioner to help recover.

Freud's main interest and aim was to bring things from the unconscious into the conscious. This practice is known as psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is based upon the assumption that only by becoming aware of earlier dilemmas, which have been repressed into our unconscious because of painful associations, can we progress psychologically. Freud viewed the human mind as being structured in three parts, the id, ego and superego, all developing at different stages in our lives.

- ◆ Id — The Id is the part of our personality concerned with satisfying instinctual basic needs of food, comfort and pleasure — the Id is present from (or possibly before) birth.
- ◆ Ego — Defined as 'The realistic awareness of self'. The 'Ego' is the logical and common-sense side to our personality. Freud believed that the Ego develops as the infant becomes aware that it is a separate being from its parents.
- ◆ Superego — The Superego develops later in a child's life from about the age of three, according to Freud. Superego curbs and controls the basic instincts of the Id, which may be socially unacceptable. The Superego acts as our conscience.

Freud believed that everybody experiences tension and conflict between the three elements of their personalities. The main goal of psychodynamic counselling, therefore, is to help people to balance the three elements of their personality so that neither the Id nor the Superego is dominant.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

Main theorists of the psychodynamic school include:

- ◆ Carl Jung
- ◆ Anna Freud
- ◆ Erik Erikson
- ◆ Alfred Adler.

Role of the Counsellor in Psychodynamic approach

Therapy aims to increase clients' abilities to exercise greater conscious control over their lives. Analysis or interpretation of dreams can be a central part of therapy. During each session the counsellor, or therapist, will encourage the client to explore feelings, thoughts and emotions, and by using psychodynamic techniques a counsellor will predominately observe and digest the information the client provides with an awareness of unconscious and conscious urges, issues of transference and accessing memories.

The counsellor may demonstrate appropriate communication skills and observe body language, expression and other clues that may provide a useful analysis of the client's behaviour and limiting beliefs. This knowledge and information will be used to provide the client with support, understanding and guidance and will empower the client to work towards making positive changes. There may be pauses throughout the counselling session but the client will be encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions in their own time. Reflective pauses can provide as much, if not more, valuable information than a long monologue. The counsellor will also encourage the client to explore free-association — where the client talks about the first thing that comes into their thoughts, even though it may not relate to the subject under discussion at the time — and free-thinking.

Outcome 2

The Cognitive Behavioural School

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) had its beginnings in the early 1900s. The Cognitive Behavioural Approach to Counselling aims to change observable and measurable behaviour. A person responds to a given situation due to behaviour that has been reinforced as a child. For example, someone who suffers from arachnophobia will probably run away screaming (response) at the sight of a spider (stimulus). Cognitive Behavioural counsellors believe that all thought patterns and subsequent behaviour is learned and, therefore, it can be unlearned. This is in contrast to the psychodynamic approach, which emphasises that behaviour is determined by instinctual drives.

Main theorists of the Cognitive Behavioural school include:

- ◆ Ivan Pavlov
- ◆ BF Skinner
- ◆ Albert Bandura
- ◆ George Kelly
- ◆ Aaron Beck
- ◆ Albert Ellis

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

Role of the Counsellor in the Cognitive Behavioural Approach

Cognitive Behavioural counsellors or therapists use a range of behaviour modification techniques. A counsellor would identify the unwanted behaviour with a client and together they would work to change or adapt the behaviour. They challenge automatic negative thoughts and identify the relationship between thought, behaviour and feelings. The aim would be that the unwanted behaviour or way of negative thinking stops altogether or is changed in such a way that it is no longer a problem.

Clients might be taught skills to help them manage their lives more effectively. For example, they may be taught how to relax in situations that produce an anxiety response and rewarded or positively reinforced when desirable behaviour occurs. Another method used involves learning desirable behaviour by watching and copying others who already behave in the desired way. The Cognitive behavioral counsellor uses the skills of listening reflection and clarification in addition to a range of therapeutic tools.

Outcome 3

The Humanistic School

The Humanistic school developed in the 1950s. Humanistic counsellors work with the belief that it is not life events that cause problems, but how the individual experiences and processes life events. The Humanistic approach to counselling encourages the client to learn to understand how negative responses to life events can lead to psychological discomfort. The approach aims for acceptance of both the negative and positive aspects of oneself. Humanistic counsellors aim to help clients to explore their own thoughts and feelings and to work out their own solutions to their problems.

Main theorists of the Humanistic school include:

- ◆ Carl Rogers
- ◆ Fritz Perls
- ◆ Eric Berne
- ◆ Irvin Yalom
- ◆ Emmy van Deurzen

Role of the Counsellor in the Humanistic Approach

Humanistic therapy focuses on the belief that the client — and not the counsellor — is the best expert on their own thoughts, feelings, experiences and problems. The counsellor does not suggest any course of action, make recommendations, ask probing questions or try to interpret anything the client says. The responsibility for working out problems and developing coping strategies based on understanding rests with the client. When the counsellor does respond, their aim is to reflect and clarify what the client has been saying. A trained client-centred counsellor aims to show understanding, acceptance and honesty which they believe will enable the client's self-understanding and psychological growth.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

Outcome 4

This Outcome is intended to give learners the opportunity to review and evaluate how their theoretical learning has contributed to the development of skills in relation to the three schools of counselling.

Throughout the Unit, learners should be encouraged to seek constructive feedback from relevant people and recognise the importance of learning through reflection and how this contributes to their personal development. Again, the importance of maintaining confidentiality and adhering to professional ethical guidelines should be emphasised. It is recommended that a standardised observation checklist be utilised by the tutor to support the assessment of the practical activity.

It would be beneficial if learners maintained a portfolio of evidence throughout the Unit, gathering together any feedback and reflective notes which may be based on role-play activities, class discussions etc.

Some reflective techniques that could be used are:

- ◆ Questioning what, why and how something was said or done
- ◆ Viewing from different perspectives
- ◆ Thinking about consequences
- ◆ Asking 'what if....?'

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

Delivery of this Unit could incorporate a variety of teaching and learning methods to encourage a learner-centred, participative and practical approach, including:

- ◆ Teacher/lecturer led presentations and demonstration
- ◆ Group work, group discussions and group research projects
- ◆ One to one discussions
- ◆ Handouts, books and articles (current relevance)
- ◆ Visiting speakers and practitioners
- ◆ Role play activities, perhaps based on case studies is particularly recommended
- ◆ Self-directed learning including research, self-evaluation and reflection
- ◆ Tutor observation

Experienced teachers/lecturers will be aware that using therapeutic techniques may result in underlying issues emerging from participants and should be sensitive to this, making learners aware of this possibility and having guidelines on how to deal with this should it arise.

This Unit is delivered within the ethos of an educational setting not a therapeutic environment so for safety, signposting learners to the institution's counselling service, if available, would be appropriate. Learners should be introduced to the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

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.

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3

All Evidence Requirements must be covered.

An appropriate instrument of assessment would be an extended response in which the learner summarises their investigations, providing the necessary detail in describing each approach, outlining the historical development and explaining the role of the counsellor for each of the three schools. This could be produced under open-book conditions, allowing the learner to refer to their own portfolio of information and notes gathered during the Unit.

Although it may be beneficial for learners to work in groups and share information the final investigation must be the learner's own work. Initial discussions can be carried out in groups and class expositions.

Outcome 4

An appropriate instrument of assessment for this Outcome would be a reflective account supported by a completed tutor's observation of the simulated counselling session.

Learners should describe the knowledge and insight gained from their participation in the counselling session and using feedback from tutors and peers, identify areas of personal strength and areas requiring further development

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.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

In this Unit, learners will be involved in an investigation and self-evaluation and review of counselling skills. There may be opportunities in the practical counselling sessions to develop effective communication and interpersonal skills.

Learners will have opportunities to develop Core Skills in *Communication* at SCQF level 6 by participation in a counselling session, and their skills in *Working with Others at SCQF level 5* in seeking and responding to feedback from others in the review and evaluation of their counselling skills.

Learners must take responsibility for their own performance in the investigation and in the review and evaluation of their counselling skills. This will allow them to develop aspects of the Core Skill *Problem Solving at SCQF level 5*. If the learner uses a computer while undertaking any part of this Unit, eg for research or producing evidence, they will have the opportunity to develop aspects of *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* at SCQF level 5.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2016

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Business Development and Customer Support team, telephone 0303 333 0330.

General information for learners

Unit title: Counselling Theory for Practice: an Introduction
(SCQF level 6)

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 has been designed for those who have no previous experience of counselling. Access to the Unit is at the discretion of the centre. It would be beneficial if you had already completed the Unit H2XN 11 *Counselling: an Introduction*.

You will be introduced to the Psychodynamic, Humanistic and Cognitive Behavioural Schools of Counselling and the role of the counsellor using each approach.

The 'concept' of counselling reflects the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

NB: It does not in any way permit those who have achieved it to refer to themselves as qualified counsellors.

You will be asked to:

- 1 Investigate the Psychodynamic School of Counselling.
- 2 Investigate the Cognitive Behavioural School of Counselling.
- 3 Investigate the Humanistic School of Counselling.
- 4 Describe personal understanding and insight gained through practical demonstration of one theory.

Role-play and simulated counselling sessions will be used to develop and assess your practical counselling skills. Other methods of assessment used may be an extended response and a reflective account.

During the Unit you will have the opportunity to develop your Core Skills in *Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*. There may also be opportunities to develop transferable skills such as time management, empathy, reflective practice and critical thinking.