



National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Counselling Skills: An Introduction (SCQF level 6)

Unit code: H8JJ 46

Superclass: PM

Publication date: November 2012

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit has been designed for candidates who have no previous experience of counselling. The Unit will introduce candidates to the main theoretical schools of counselling and the historical development of each. Candidates will investigate the psycho dynamic, humanistic and behaviourist schools of counselling and the role of the counsellor using each approach. This is a freestanding Unit which is an introductory Unit to provide underpinning and basic knowledge of the subject. The 'concept' of counselling reflects the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy 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 Behavioural School of Counselling.
- 3 Investigate the Humanistic School of Counselling.
- 4 Reflect on personal learning and development of counselling skills.

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 candidates if they had completed the Unit H2XN 11 *Counselling: An introduction*.

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.

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

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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.

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.
- (d) Participate in a role play to apply a range of counselling skills used in the Psychodynamic Approach.

Outcome 2

Investigate the Behavioural School of Counselling.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the Behavioural Approach.
- (b) Outline the historical development the Behavioural Approach.
- (c) Explain the role of the counsellor in the Behavioural Approach.
- (d) Participate in a role play to apply a range of counselling skills used in the 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.
- (d) Participate in a role play to apply a range of counselling skills used in the Humanistic Approach.

Outcome 4

Reflect on personal learning and development of counselling skills.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe knowledge/skills gained.
- (b) Seek and accept constructive feedback from tutor and peers.
- (c) Evaluate own strengths and developmental needs.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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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 on issues emerging (during role play) should be stressed to candidates.

Outcome 1 — Performance and written and/or oral evidence

Evidence for Outcome 1 may be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit. Evidence could be gathered in a candidate folio.

Candidates will investigate Psychodynamic School of Counselling and the role of the counsellor in the Psychodynamic approach.

Candidates are required to:

- ◆ describe the Psychodynamic Approach.
- ◆ outline the historical development the psychodynamic approach.
- ◆ explain the role of the counsellor in the psychodynamic approach.
- ◆ organise and present findings in an appropriate format respecting confidentiality where appropriate.

Candidates will participate in a role play activity to apply a range of counselling skills using the Psychodynamic approach to counselling.

An assessor observation checklist should be used to support performance evidence.

Outcome 2 — Performance and written and/or oral evidence

Evidence for Outcome 1 will be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit. Evidence could be gathered in a candidate folio.

Candidates will investigate Behavioural School of Counselling and the role of the counsellor in the Behavioural approach.

Candidates are required to:

- ◆ describe the Behavioural Approach.
- ◆ outline the historical development the Behavioural Approach.
- ◆ explain the role of the counsellor in the Behavioural Approach.
- ◆ organise and present findings in an appropriate format respecting confidentiality where appropriate.

Candidates will participate in a role play activity to apply a range of counselling skills using the Behavioural approach to counselling.

An assessor observation checklist should be used to support performance evidence.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 3 — Performance and written and/or oral evidence

Evidence for Outcome 1 will be gathered in open-book conditions at appropriate points throughout the Unit. Evidence could be gathered in a candidate folio.

Candidates will investigate Humanistic School of Counselling and the role of the counsellor in the Humanistic Approach.

Candidates are required to:

- ◆ describe the Psychodynamic Approach.
- ◆ outline the historical development the Humanistic Approach.
- ◆ explain the role of the counsellor in the Humanistic Approach.
- ◆ organise and present findings in an appropriate format respecting confidentiality where appropriate.

Candidates will participate in a role play activity to apply a range of counselling skills using the Humanistic Approach to counselling.

An assessor observation checklist should be used to support performance evidence.

Outcome 4 — Written and/or oral evidence

Evidence for Outcome 4 must take the form of a completed candidate journal which will give the candidate the opportunity to record their progress in developing a range of knowledge and skills gained in relation to three of the following counselling approaches:

- ◆ Psychodynamic
- ◆ Behaviourist
- ◆ Humanistic

Each journal should contain the following:

- 1 A description of knowledge/skills gained.
- 2 A record of feedback from others in relation to counselling skills.
- 3 A record of the candidate's analysis of strengths and developmental needs in relation to own counselling skills.



National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Counselling Skills: 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 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit has been designed for candidates who have no previous experience of counselling. The Unit will introduce candidates to the main theoretical schools of counselling and the historical development of each. Candidates will investigate the psycho dynamic, humanistic and behaviourist schools of counselling and the role of the counsellor using each approach. This is a freestanding Unit which is an introductory Unit to provide underpinning and basic knowledge of the subject. It is important to emphasise that completion of this Unit does not in any way permit those who have achieved it to refer to themselves as qualified counsellors. The 'concept' of counselling reflects the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

Given the nature of this Unit, the importance of maintaining confidentiality and responsibilities relating to disclosure on issues emerging during role play should be stressed to candidates.

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
- ◆ Behaviourist school

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:

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- ◆ 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. Main theorists of the psychodynamic school include:

- ◆ Jean-Martin Charcot
- ◆ 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.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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The counsellor may say very little, but will be observing body language, expression and anything else 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 long pauses and silences 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 Behaviourist School

Behaviour therapy had its beginnings in the early 1900's. The 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). Behaviourists believe that that 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 Behaviourist school include:

- ◆ Ivan Pavlov
- ◆ John Watson
- ◆ BF Skinner
- ◆ Albert Bandura

Role of the Counsellor in the Behaviourist Approach

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. The aim would be that the unwanted behaviour 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 behavioural counsellor uses the skills of listening, reflection and clarification, to enable the counsellor to make an assessment of all the factors relating to the undesirable behaviour.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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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 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:

- ◆ Abraham Maslow
- ◆ Carl Rogers

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 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 empathy, warmth and genuineness, which they believe will enable the client's self-understanding and psychological growth.

Outcome 4

This Outcome is intended to give candidates the opportunity to review and evaluate their theoretical learning and development of skills in relation to the three schools of counselling. The candidate is required to keep a weekly journal in which they will record something of their experience of their learning on the Course and upon their experience of undertaking the role plays. They will be expected to take responsibility for improving their performance by identifying areas for improvement through self-evaluation and taking account of feedback from the teacher/lecturer. The counselling skills can be practised, reviewed and evaluated through role play and individual classroom or group activities.

Candidates should be given opportunities to exhibit counselling skills in practical contexts such as role play exercises. Again, the importance of maintaining confidentiality should be emphasised.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling Skills: An Introduction (SCQF level 6)

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 presentations
- ◆ DVD presentations
- ◆ Large and small group work and discussions
- ◆ Handouts
- ◆ Books and articles
- ◆ Visiting speakers
- ◆ Role play activities
- ◆ Individual and group research
- ◆ Internet searches
- ◆ Reflection
- ◆ Observation and evaluation of self and others in simulated counselling contexts

Teachers/lecturers could help candidates develop their counselling skills through demonstration and selecting appropriate role play scenarios to give candidates as much practice as possible before their assessment takes place. Experienced teachers/lecturers will be aware that using role play techniques may result in underlying issues emerging from participants and should be sensitive to this, making candidates aware of this possibility and having guidelines on how to deal with this should it arise. Candidates should be introduced to the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3

Evidence can be generated using different types of instruments of assessment. Candidates should present their evidence in an appropriate format. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

This will be in the form of an investigation. The investigation will require candidates to gather information from a variety of sources which could include:

- ◆ Visiting speakers
- ◆ Internet research
- ◆ Library

It may be beneficial for candidates to work in groups and share information although the final investigation must be the candidate's own work. Candidates should discuss and agree with the teacher/lecturer a suitable format for presenting the information. Initial discussions can be carried out in groups and whole class expositions.

National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Counselling Skills: An Introduction (SCQF level 6)

An assessor observation checklist must be used to support the performance evidence. The checklist will record participation in role play exercises which ensure that the candidate has the ability to effectively apply basic counselling skills using each approach in a simulated context.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to practise the simulated counselling session before being assessed.

Outcome 4

Feedback will be from the teacher/ lecturer and could be from other candidates who have observed the role plays. Candidate's reflection should show that they have taken into account their own self-evaluation and the feedback given by others.

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.

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.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

In this Unit, candidates will be involved in an investigation and self-evaluation and review of counselling skills. There may be opportunities in the role plays of counselling sessions to develop effective communication and interpersonal skills. Candidates will have opportunities to develop communication skills and their skills in *Working with Others* in seeking and responding to feedback from others in the review and evaluation of their counselling skills. Candidates have to take responsibility for their own performance in the investigation and in the review and evaluation of their counselling skills. This may allow them to develop the three components activities of *Problem Solving* — Critical Thinking, Planning and Organising and Reviewing and Evaluating. If the candidate uses a computer while undertaking any part of this Unit, eg for research, they will have the opportunity to develop *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* skills.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Unit title: Counselling Skills: 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.

The Unit will introduce you to the main theoretical schools of counselling and the historical development of each. You will carry out investigations into the psycho dynamic, humanistic and behaviourist schools of counselling and the role of the counsellor using each approach. This is an introductory Unit to the skills and knowledge used in counselling contexts and achievement of this will not allow you to practice as a counsellor. It will help prepare you for further study in this area such as the HNC in Counselling

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

- 1 Investigate the Psychodynamic School of Counselling.
- 2 Investigate the Behavioural School of Counselling.
- 3 Investigate the Humanistic School of Counselling.
- 4 Reflect on personal learning and development of counselling skills.

There are four assessments for the Unit:

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 are assessed by investigations and role plays to allow you to apply counselling skills in a controlled environment.

The investigations will require you to collect information from a variety of sources.

Outcome 4 is assessed by a reflective journal in which you are required to reflect on the knowledge and skills you have gained throughout the Unit.

There may be opportunities throughout the Unit to develop your Core Skills, particularly in *Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*.