

Introduction to counselling concepts essay



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Introduction to Counselling Concepts DRAFT Learner Statement 1: 31/1/06 - I am delighted to begin my path towards future mastery of counselling skills. I have already developed a strong background in mediation and psychology with numerous accreditations to my name. In undertaking my studies in counselling skills I seek to expand my repertoire of knowledge and understanding in the broad psychosocial arena, and add some useful new abilities to my professional ' toolkit'.

The counselling concepts class is somewhat larger than on other courses I have attended, I had grown accustomed to working in small intimate groups. I hope to engender trust and friendship with the other students, however it can be difficult to do so when one has limited contact with others for a discussion or practice session of short duration. Counselling is defined as is a set of psychological techniques intended to improve mental health, emotional or behavioral issues in individuals (who on a formal basis, would be called ' clients'). These deleterious issues often make it hard for people to manage their lives and achieve their goals. Counselling (or the more professional term, Psychotherapy) is aimed at easing these problems, and attempts to solve them via the application of varying approaches - Merely being a listening ear for someone and their issues can often allow them to gain a clearer insight into the truth of their internal grievance, and so self-actualize a newfound clarity of awareness.

When discussing the term Counselling, it is important to make note of the dichotomy between professional Psychotherapy, and the informal use of counselling skills (sometimes described as " counselling with a small ' c'"). The term ' counselling' and the title ' counsellor' are often used to mean the

practice of someone providing a person with extremely informal and unstructured moral support, along with advice on a perceived problem or issue, e. g. guidance counsellor, fashion counsellor. Of course, no true Counselling Professional would ever presume to offer advice, he is there merely to listen and facilitate the client's catharsis.

The Counselling Professional must also operate in a highly structured and secure environment, he does not have the 'luxury' of being able to step in and out of the process. Thus there is, unfortunately, frequent confusion in the general public as to a Counselling Professional's duties and responsibilities. Therefore a different terminology is used for users of counselling skills, who are not bona fide Counsellors. In lieu of Counsellors and Clients, one can say Helpers and Helpees. Examples of occupations in which Helpers might work include Police Officers, Clergy, Medics and Social Workers.

Introduction to Counselling Concepts DRAFT Learner Statement 2: 7/2/06 –
The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy is the largest and broadest counselling oriented associate body in Britain. It works with many other organisations on a guidance basis, and its Ethical Framework for counselling and psychotherapy is highly regarded and much referred to. The BACP is seeking to amend the law, and require all Counsellors to have a professional qualification before they can practice, in order to ease concerns over quackery in the industry. There is another body named CAMPAG (Counselling, Advice, Mediation), Psychotherapy and Guidance) which provides standards for academic achievement and qualification. Certain

qualities of character possessed by a practitioner of counselling skills are likely to expedite their labours.

These may include maintaining open mindedness, having a calm and patient attitude, projecting a disarming demeanour, and having a genuine desire to offer support to others. Possessing a healthy understanding of the darker echelons of the human psyche can also be a boon. Active listening is a structured way of listening and responding. It focuses attention on the speaker.

Suspending one's own frame of reference and suspending judgement, (thereby entering a state of cognitive dissonance and compartmentalisation) are important in order to fully attend to the speaker's conveyance. It is also important to observe the other person's behaviour and body language. Having heard, the listener may then paraphrase the speaker's words. From my previous experiences in mediation training, I am already familiar with the use of Active Listening as a tool. I am comfortable and confident with active listening in any foreseeable capacity. Introduction to Counselling Concepts DRAFT Learner Statement 3: 14/2/06 - The Principles of the BACP Ethical Framework are critical to the safe, ethical, and effective practice of care towards the client.

With a broadly recognised and agreed Ethical Framework in place, and in easy reference, the general standard of care in the industry is far less likely to be compromised by unforeseen complications in the relationship with the client, and by deliberate or accidental ethical infractions on the part of the counsellor. The six principles of the BACP ethical Framework (Autonomy,

Fidelity, Justice, Beneficence, Non-Maleficence and Self-Interest) each cover an important tenet of the nature of the professional relationship, which when combined provide a framework for protection of not only the client, but also the counsellor themselves. When designing an environment within which to conduct an effort of Attention Giving to another it is important to make certain that the location is quiet, so that distractions may be minimised. The zone should be secure so as to ensure confidentiality, and the area should be warm and comfortable. As regards seating arrangements, a clear line of sight between 'Helper' and 'Helpee' is a requirement for eye contact. The Helper should also ensure that their physical and emotional needs have been met i.

e. that they aren't overly hungry, stressed or requiring a break. Introduction to Counselling Concepts DRAFT Learner Statement 3: 28/2/06 - Further examination of the BACPs Ethical Framework BACP Ethical Principles: Fidelity, Autonomy, Beneficence, Non-maleficence, Justice, Self-Respect. BACP Ethical Values: Respecting human rights and dignity Ensuring the integrity of practitioner-client relationships Enhancing the quality of professional knowledge and its application Alleviating personal distress and suffering Fostering a sense of self that is meaningful to the person(s) concerned Increasing personal effectiveness Enhancing the quality of relationships between people Appreciating the variety of human experience and culture Striving for the fair and adequate provision of counselling, and psychotherapy services.

The values are different from principles, as values are general ethical ideals to be upheld, whereas principles are a more pro-active expression of

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professional regard. Whilst all Ethical Values have merit; in my opinion, 'Alleviating personal distress and suffering' is the most important Value, as to do so is the primary mission of any Counsellor. The maxim 'Do no harm, and do one's best to aid those in suffering' is surely all healers' greatest tenet. Paraphrasing is a technique in which a statement or remark made by the Client is re-iterated back to them by the Counsellor, in other words or in another way so to gain clarification, or to promote contemplation by the Client of their own statements. A direct repetition of the clients remarks would seem patronising and annoying, so paraphrasing is used.

In essence a paraphrase restates the essence or thesis of the clients statements, and all minor details, whilst avoiding an abrupt summarising of said statements, or repeating them in identical words. Things to remember: Asking questions can lead to a loss of the client's autonomy, paraphrasing must use 'neutral' (non-biased) language. Introduction to Counselling Concepts DRAFT Learner Statement 3: 7/3/06 – Absolute Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to the client. In certain specific circumstances, the confidentiality mandate ought to be eschewed in order to best protect the client's welfare, or the welfare of others. Such circumstances may include a child disclosing sexual abuse; the threat of suicide; or if the Counsellor gains the knowledge that a serious crime has been committed by the client, or shall be in future.

If the counsellor intuits that the client is about to disclose something of magnitude, where Absolute Confidentiality may not be guaranteed, then he ought to tell the client such. Opinions vary however, as a Client may feel intimidated into not disclosing something serious which they may have spent

an age struggling with, before finally feeling able to tell. The Counsellor would be advised to take every case on a singular basis, one rule cannot apply to every situation. Things to Remember: Observation skills – non-verbal language Client posture, angle of legs, and distance from Counsellor. Check client's level of engagement.

Check for signs of nervousness, hand wringing, nail chewing etc. Possible Fidgeting with Jewellery, buttons pens etc. Client may need time and reassurance. Check for maintenance of eye-contact, sympathetic responses such as foot tapping, sighing etc. Client may have sequestered thoughts lingering within their mind.

Introduction to Counselling Concepts DRAFT Learner Statement 3: 14/3/06 – When requested to counsel a Client, a Counsellor ought to ask himself three simple questions. Can I help this individual? Should I help this individual? Am I the best choice of practitioner for this individual? If the honest answer to any of these questions may be 'no', then referral to another professional, or to a specialist organisation must be considered. Some possible reasons for considering referral may include; Counsellor may not possess skills requisite to care of the client. Counsellor may have a close prior relationship, and therefore cause a conflict of interest.

A personality, religious or cultural clash may occur between parties. An unforeseen issue may arise which the Counsellor feels unable to handle. The Client may have issues which the Counsellor has has prior personal experience of. This increases the risk of the Counsellor becoming emotionally

compromised or over-involved. Time and scheduling issues between parties may force referral.

The Client themselves may request referral. Medical advice or treatment may be required. Therapy can only be taken so far. When conducting a referral it is critical to provide adequate information to the client, and fully explain the circumstances of why the Counsellor feels that referral shall be beneficial. Simply handing a Client some contact details and leaving them to it would be a disgraceful abuse of trust, known as 'Blind Referral'. Reflection is a more empathic form of paraphrasing.

Exploring the true emotional feelings of the client can be beneficial. For example; a client displaying great anger may not genuinely feel angry, but rather be manifesting it as a sympathetic reaction to feelings of disappointment and rejection. Allowing the client to perceive their primal motivations can provide personal insight, whilst defusing emotional barrier sensations.