

# Counselling assignment level 4 essay



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Counselling Assignment I. In this assignment, I will analyse the principal distinctions between counselling and psychotherapy; I will evaluate the key requirements to be an effective counsellor and the conditions for which it would be appropriate to see a counsellor. I will do that by using a range of resources in my research, such as Text Books, Journals and the Internet. 1. 1

Analyse the principal distinctions between psychotherapy and counselling  
According to the BACP “ Counselling and psychotherapy are umbrella terms that cover a range of talking therapies.

They are delivered by trained practitioners who work with people over a short or long term to help them bring about effective change or enhance their wellbeing. ” (www. bacp. co. uk;) This definitions suggests that counselling and psychotherapy both requires helping skills as they are both aim to help clients to overcome difficulties or traumas in their lives; states that both delivered by trained practitioners and in terms of time frame, both can be short or long term help, depending on the issue or problem that the client needs to solve.

Although often we see that counselling tends to be short term, while psychotherapy usually means long- term engagement in therapy. The European Association for Counselling (1996) defines counselling as the following: “ Counselling is an interactive learning process contracted between counsellor(s) and client(s), be they individuals, families, groups or institutions, which approaches in a holistic way, social, cultural, economic and/or emotional issues.

Counselling may be concerned with addressing and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crisis, improving relationships, developmental issues, promoting and developing personal awareness, working with feelings, thoughts, perceptions and internal or external conflict. The overall aim is provide clients with opportunities to work in self defined ways, towards living in more satisfying and resourceful ways as individuals and as members of the broader society. ” This outlines a more specific definition for ounselling and it suggests different issues that can be resolved through counselling; such as a personal crisis or relationship issues. We can see from these examples in the definition, that counselling does not deal with deeply rooted issues, such as child abuse or other deep rooted traumatic experiences, which has an impact on the client’s present life, cause some kind of changes in their personality or behaviour. Psychotherapy is rooted in Freudian psychodynamics, so it’s medical aspect to the training makes a significant difference to counselling.

Both working with clients during a psychotherapy session and analysis of the psychotherapist themselves focused in-depth consideration of past issues. Petrushka Clarkson states: ” The psychodynamic past to psychotherapy still exerts an influence on the debate, and consequently on perceptions. ” (www.counselling. ltd. uk; 24. 09. 2011) Another difference between counselling and psychotherapy is, that in psychotherapy the therapist works in more depth, usually for a longer period of time and more frequently, than it can be noted in counselling.

This is because while in psychotherapy the practitioner is looking for the roots of the issue, explores and bring them into connection with a present or

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repeated behaviour patterns (e. g. : every relationship of the client ends the same way); in counselling very often it is about situational issues; such as a miscarriage, a loss of someone or perhaps a sudden financial problem that the clients find him/herself in.

The following definition supports the concepts that psychotherapy is more engaged with patients who has deep rooted issues or psychological problems and in need of a therapy that supports Freudian techniques such as the psychodynamic approach. “ The treatment of a behavior disorder, mental illness, or any other condition by psychological means. Psychotherapy may utilize insight, persuasion, suggestion, reassurance, and instruction so that patients may see themselves and their problems more realistically and have the desire to cope effectively with them. ” (www. medterms. com; 29. 09. 011) It was also suggested that psychotherapy suits people, that can not open up easily and do not talk much; they need more help from the practitioner to resolve an issue and perhaps the therapist has a more active role during sessions. Counselling however for people who need to reorganise their thoughts about the situation, and the counsellor role is to ‘ guide’ the client and refocus them on the issue that they are already explored themselves. “ The counsellor speaks very little and gives the client plenty of space to offload and talk themselves into self-knowledge . ” (www. hypno-analysis. co. uk; 24. 09. 1) As we can see from my research, both counselling and psychotherapy are methods of therapy and they both use essential skills such as active listening or empathy to allow clients to discover and explore their feelings and thoughts about their situation and they offer help through a trained Therapist in a safe environment. However while counselling centres

around behaviour patterns and it aims to change those patterns from negative to positive in order to help to overcome some personal problems, until psychotherapy focus mostly on emotional problems and difficulties while giving an insight into these during a longer period of time.

It helps people to understand their negative feelings, thoughts and actions and the Therapist aims to get to the root of this problem with the clients together so that the cause of the negative behaviour is identified and dealt with in the present. These deep rooted issues are from the past and causes problems in the present life of the client, so during psychotherapy the Client is helped to understand this deep rooted problems and the effect of the present behaviour in order to able to change these behavioural patterns and solve those issues.

In my opinion it is only a fine line that separates Counselling and Psychotherapy and I believe that the difference is more like in the approach of the therapy than between the two discipline themselves. I think that a Counsellor can be as highly trained as a psychotherapist or can use the psychodynamic approach in their therapies and a psychotherapist can lead a session which does not engage in deeply rooted issues, just like a counselling session.

In conclusion I believe it is fair to say that the differences between counselling and psychotherapy perhaps can be found at the level of the individual therapists practice rather than on a wider level of definable principles of these disciplines. For example if a psychotherapist is working in a mental health hospital, she/he might be dealing with more deep,

psychological issues whereas another psychotherapist who has a private practice might deal with situational issues such as bereavement or stress just like a counsellor.

As the BACP states “ It is not possible to make a generally accepted distinction between counselling and Psychotherapy. ” (www. bacp. co. uk; 30. 09. 2011) 1. 2 Evaluate the key requirements to be an effective Counsellor I believe that to become an effective Counsellor takes a long process as in this Profession continuous professional development, alongside with many practical hours is essential. One of the key requirements in my opinion is to (1. )gain a qualification that gives an insight about this profession, although as we know currently there is no such a requirement in the UK.

However I believe that once somebody gained a Professional Qualification it will help to gain the confidence as I do not believe that possession of helping skills is quite enough to be an effective counsellor. Another requirements are those helping skills and Carl Rogers (1902 - 1987) called them (2. )The Core Conditions. These are the following: •“ C = Congruence (realness, genuineness. Your body language reflects what you are saying). •U = Unconditional Positive Regard (respect for the client. You hold the client in high regard at all times). •E = Empathy (a complete understanding of the client’s thoughts and feelings). (http://counsellingcentral. com/carl-rogers-client-centred-therapy-and-the-core-conditions/; 03. 10. 11. ) Beside the core conditions, it is essential for an effective counsellor to provide a (3. )safe environment for the client –that both covers physical and mental safety while holding up the rights of the client and maintaining confidentiality, when it is <https://assignbuster.com/counselling-assignment-level-4-essay/>

appropriate. Physical safety of the counsellor must be ensured as well. For me safe environment also means, that the practice of the counsellor is non-judgemental and anti-discriminative.

If the counsellor feels that for example because of his/her beliefs or attitude towards certain groups, disables him to help a client, the counsellor then should refer the client to an appropriate colleague or institute, where they can further assist and help that client. I believe that in order to be an effective counsellor, it is imperial to be clear about our own capability and if a counsellor feels that she/he is not capable of helping the client because of personal, professional reason; the counsellor should ensure that the client is referred on. It is essential to draw up a (4. contract between the client and the counsellor and when the Therapist do that, the cases when confidentially can be broken, must be discussed. (if the counsellor feels that the client pose harm to himself/herself or anybody else or the client express thoughts that can be associated with terrorism, the confidentiality can be broken. ) (5. )

Building up trust with the client- is an essential requirement in effective counselling as if the client do not trust the counsellor, the therapy can not be effective as the client will not open up to the Therapist. (6. Time keeping- both from the counsellor and the client point of view. It has to be part of the contract as well. If the client or the counsellor can make the session, they have to notify each other in a reasonable time frame and also they have to do the same thing if either of them is going to be late. (7. ) As I mentioned earlier, Continuous Professional Development is essential in order to be effective as the Counsellor need to keep up to date with new researches and new therapy methods, in order to stay current and to be able to be the best

benefit for his/her clients. 8. ) Supervision- Whether the Counsellor is working in an institution (such as in a hospital or prison) or he/she has a private practice; supervision ensures that the workload that he/she took on is appropriate and also that he/she can “ offload” the stress that comes with this profession. It enables Therapist to be counselled (as it is a must for every therapist) and also to hold case studies if they feel that they do not progress with one of the client. Finally I believe in order to be effective as a counsellor, it is really important to have (10. self-awareness; which will help the Therapist to assess the his/her skills as a Therapist and progress at all times. For example if the Counsellor feels that the client became too attached to him/her then he can decide to refer the client to someone else. It also will enable to counsellor to be friendly but keep a certain distance a professional boundary between him/herself and the client, in order to deliver the best possible service. 1. 3 Evaluate the conditions for which it would be appropriate to see a counsellor or a psychotherapist Issue

As we can see from the diagram above, there are lot of different issues/problems that can bring people to counselling. According to Hough (2006) “ Relationship problems are high on the list of factors which prompt clients to seek counselling. ” One of the main factor in relationship problems is the repeated behaviour pattern, that often can be discovered in a client’s case; whereby based on past experiences clients repeat the negative behaviour pattern in their relationship, which leads to repeated failure in keeping a long-term relationship alive.

That is the reason why I show a connection between the issues form the past box and the relationship issues in the diagram. There counsellors and even



establishments, such as RELATE that specialise in couples and relationship therapy. It is important that both party of the relationship is voluntary entering the therapy and they are both committed in order to get the best possible result in that type of therapy. Issues from the past – when a client experiencing problems in their behaviour or unexpected emotional distress e. g. nxiety or even depression; it can be caused by past issues; such as childhood abuse or neglect by birth parents or a personal loss (such as both parents died early) and can impact on the client’s present life. In those cases counselling and psychotherapy can help but it has to be noted, that when there is a deep rooted issue, this can be solved over a longer period of time and as I mentioned before in this assignment, usually it is psychotherapy that deals with those issues. Eating disorders-there are lot of people around the world who suffers from eating disorders, for several reasons.

Some people , usually young girl can suffer from anorexia and can starved themselves, purly because they would like to look like as models and celebrities in magazines or television. “ Anorexia Nervosa in particular has been on the increase over the past two decades, and research has indicated that in North-America girls as young as nine years suffer from this condition. ” (Orbach, 1994) Another reason for anorexia can represent a deeper issue in one’s life; for example a person can feel that their world is falling apart and they lost control over their own lives. (e. g. they lost their jobs and at the same time their partner left them) In that case, they can feel that the only aspect in their life that can give them control is their own body and they start to control their own food intake, so that they can feel in control again, which will reduce their feeling of being failed. It has to be noted that

overeating, which leads to obesity, is another type of eating disorder and it can be called “ emotional eating” as well. That means that the person is overeating whenever she/he is unhappy and it leads to gaining weight, which will make them even more frustrated and can lead to more food binging.

In that case the Therapist aims to break this vicious cycle and perhaps to change the relationship between the client and the food. In any type of eating disorder the most important task of the counsellor is, to explore and identify the cause of the eating disorder and the relationship between the client and the food, in order to enable the negative behaviour pattern, which can be often a long process. Bereavement is an experience that everyone have at some point of their lives and it is a common reason as well to turn to a counsellor.

There are specialists in these part of the therapy as well. (an example of this is CURSE, who specialise in bereavement counselling) “ Bereavement counselling helps people to deal with deep feelings which may be experienced soon after a death or indeed at any stage thereafter. ” (Hough, 2006) Although bereaved people usually have the support of their family and friends, there are certain situations when it does not seem to be enough and the client need professional support as well to be able to deal with his/her grief.

An example of that when a child has died in the family and both parents are deeply hurt and in grief and they can deal with that, they can not help each other. Often in that case they turn against each other as they are in so much pain and they need professional help, not only to overcome this terrible loss

but also to be able to remain in relationship with each other. Crisis situations can vary from each other and it has to be noted that a situation that is regarded as “ crisis” by someone might not declared as crisis by another person. An example of that, if a person loses his weekly earning e. . ? 300 as they go for a shopping they might regard this as “ crisis” as this is the only money they might have, while a wealthy person who loses ? 300 might feel that it was an unlucky trip, but will not affect him/her at a deeper level. Crisis can be for example if a person just tried to harm him/herself or others; it can be a sudden loss of another person or a discovery of a terminal illness (such as cancer or AIDS). In some cases if the counsellor feels that the crisis situation is not possible to be solved there and then, immediate referral can be the appropriate answer.

An example of that if a person tried to attempt suicide and despite the therapy session, the counsellor feels that the client still pose harm to himself/herself, they must refer the client for example to a psychiatric assessment. Telephone counselling can be another form to deal with crisis situations. An example of this is ChildLine or Samaritans. Both of these charities dealing with calls from the general public who has some crisis going on, but while Samaritans appeal to a wider group of people, until ChildLine is specifically for children and young people, who are in crisis or in a harmful/potentially harmful situations. We are inspired by a belief that we can make a difference for all children – by standing up for their rights, by listening to them, by helping them when they need us and by making them safe. ” (www. nspcc. org. uk; 03. 10. 11) This quote can be found on the website of NSPCC, which operates the ChildLine. We can see from this quote

that the volunteers of ChildLine using helping skills, such as listening to them in a safe environment to help them to overcome their immediate crisis situation and in some extreme cases, they save their lives by doing that.

The aim is exactly the same during a face-to-face consultation when a client is seeing by a counsellor in a crisis situation. Work related problems such as feeling burnt-out or stress at the workplace can leave potential client feeling anxious or stressed and they might need counselling as well. Some workplaces (for example educational institutions) have own counsellors and offers the employees therapy if they needed it. Depression and anxiety are often the reason why people seek counselling.

Both anxiety and depression can be mild or very severe and depending on that, the type of therapy or in some cases treatment in a psychiatric hospital can be appropriate. (of course a counsellor can not refer the client to the hospital but can advise to be seen by the GP and if they think, they can refer the client to a psychiatric hospital for assessment. ) “ Depressive conditions often need medical as well as psychological support, and some of the clients who are seen in counselling referred by their Gps. ” (Hough, 2006)

Addictions- some clients seek counselling as they are not able to deal with their addictions. There are different types of addictions, for example, alcohol, drugs but also there is sex addiction; which can cause serious problems as well for the client and their families, friends as well. In that case the counsellor should help the client to focus on the underlying issue of the addiction, identifying it and deal with the roots of the problem. Counselling

and psychotherapy gives the opportunity to do that in a safe, non-judgemental and supportive environment.

Other reasons to seek a counsellor includes: •Financial problems •Bullying-cyber bullying is very current especially among teenagers •Chronic illness •Rape or assault •Harassment at work •Borderline personality disorder •Problems of sexual identity. I believe the this list is not exhaust able as there can be many more other reasons in a person's life to seek a counsellor. Some people might be able to deal with for example a miscarriage with the support of family and friends, while other might not be deal with the same problem without professional help.

I believe that whatever the reason is for seeking the help of the counsellor, it is important that the Therapist always acknowledge the fact that if the Client came to counselling, it means that for her/him the issue is not manageable and in need of professional help. The client should be always given the opportunity to explore these issues and resolve them with the counsellor together and if it is appropriate to be referred to a specialist or to a more appropriate service. Bibliography Books

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