

# Unit 24: Introduction to Counselling Skills for Health and Social Care Settings

<b>Unit code:</b>	<b>T/600/8979</b>
<b>QCF Level 3:</b>	<b>BTEC Nationals</b>
<b>Credit value:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Guided learning hours:</b>	<b>60</b>

## ● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to introduce learners to the principles and practice of being a 'skilled helper' so they can develop the ability to manage and extend the supportive scope of a helping relationship using counselling skills.

## ● Unit introduction

In any health and social care setting, employees at all levels will be required to listen to patients, clients, their friends and relatives expressing their views, concerns and emotions. These can be complex and sometimes difficult interactions, therefore it is important that employees have the skills and necessary professional boundaries to be effective helpers in these situations, and to keep themselves emotionally safe.

Employees need to be aware of the scope and limitations of helping relationships and how best their knowledge and skills can be utilised with, and on behalf, of the client. The extent to which health and social care practitioners become effective listeners can depend on both inherent and taught skills. This unit focuses on the identification, practice and development of a range of interpersonal and counselling skills.

Learners will develop the underpinning knowledge and ability to initiate, sustain and conclude an interaction with a client/patient, beyond that of being an effective listener to the level of skilled helper. They will understand and practise the parameters of the skills utilised in such helping relationships, including managing the process and, where necessary, referring the client to alternative sources of support.

It is important to note that on completion of this unit learners are not qualified to undertake client work in a counselling context. An extensive programme of additional, higher level study and commitment to a period of personal therapy are required in order to become a counselling practitioner, eligible for professional body membership and/or accreditation.

Effective listening and questioning techniques, and adherence to the boundaries of an ethical helping relationship, will be taught along with the understanding that an individual's skills need to be continually reviewed and developed.

## ● Learning outcomes

### On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know the processes for initiating, maintaining, developing and concluding a helping relationship using counselling skills
- 2 Be able to use counselling skills to initiate, maintain, develop and conclude a helping relationship
- 3 Be able to evaluate own development of counselling skills
- 4 Know referral procedures and boundary issues.

# Unit content

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## 1 Know the processes for initiating, maintaining, developing and concluding a helping relationship using counselling skills

*Initiate a relationship:* ethical concerns; boundaries of the relationship; accepting own limitations; communicating limitations of the helping relationship; equal opportunities; appropriate setting; arranging first contact; contracting, confidentiality; developing an empathic relationship; early referrals

*Strategies:* challenging skills; communicating deeper empathic understanding; enabling and managing silences, time responses, managing personal feelings and agenda, utilising the 'here and now'

*Problem solving and decision making:* facilitate client self-understanding; prioritising client concerns; reviewing current thinking; facilitating client's own identification of solutions; encouraging creative thinking; mind maps; strategies for self-help; identifying sources of help

*Integrating:* using a range of helping skills in a structured and coherent way

*Benefits to client:* real time monitoring of the interaction(s), checking in with the client, reviewing and summarising outcomes, identifying and managing the influences of the client and helper

*Ending:* offering unbiased information, referrals, enabling clients to choose appropriate strategies and formulate a plan

## 2 Be able to use counselling skills to initiate, maintain, develop and conclude a helping relationship

*Demonstrate skills:* Rogers' concept of core conditions as a basis for all counselling skills use; giving attention to the client; keeping the client at the centre of all interactions; use of appropriate encouragement; responding warmly and with genuineness; being empathic; client respect; suspending personal value judgements; paraphrasing and summarising client material; reflecting content and meaning; reflecting feelings; appropriate use of questions; use of Egan 3 stage model of helping

## 3 Be able to evaluate own development of counselling skills

*Strengths and weaknesses:* summarising key elements, self-reflection, self-evaluation of skills, improving client outcomes, improving own skills, improving knowledge to support skills use, group factors, confidentiality

*Supervision of skills:* observation and feedback from, eg peers, course facilitator, supervisor; offer and receive constructive criticism and feedback; use feedback to develop skills work

*Self-evaluation of skills:* awareness of own limits, growth of personal development, self-awareness, insights, being able to develop and move forward

#### 4 Know referral procedures and boundary issues

*Support mechanisms in the health and social care setting:* the range of services available; communication between different professionals and carers; and others involved in helping client, eg family, friends, partner, colleagues, peers

*Referral:* reasons for referral, availability of organisations to which clients may be referred, accessibility of organisations to which clients may be referred

*Client commitments:* time; frequency; costs; engaging in the process

*Boundary issues:* confidentiality, limits of own skills, client resistance, practitioner resistance

## Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
<b>P1</b> describe processes for initiating, maintaining, developing and concluding a helping relationship [SM1; SM2; EP3]	<b>M1</b> assess how integrating counselling skills should support clients	
<b>P2</b> demonstrate use of counselling skills in a simulated environment [CT5; SM5; SM6; SM7; EP4; SP5]		
<b>P3</b> review the strengths and weaknesses of own counselling skills development and practice [RL3; RL4]	<b>M2</b> assess how the development of counselling skills affects self-development	<b>D1</b> analyse own strengths and weaknesses in using counselling skills
<b>P4</b> describe the importance of referral to other organisations [TW3]	<b>M3</b> discuss how supervision and peer feedback can improve use of skills and self-development.	<b>D2</b> evaluate the effectiveness of the use of counselling skills in aiding clients' decision-making processes.
<b>P5</b> describe potential boundary issues that could occur in a helping relationship. [IE3; IE5]		

**PLTS:** This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills which are embedded in the assessment of this unit. By achieving the criteria, learners will have demonstrated effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

# Essential guidance for tutors

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## Delivery

**It is important to note that at this level learners should not be providing professional counselling services with users of services.**

The distinction between the informed use of counselling skills in the context of being a skilled helper in a health and social care setting as opposed to that of being a practising counsellor should be clarified for learners. They will also benefit from an appreciation of the training required for the counselling profession, as this may be a career progression opportunity they aspire to in the future.

Learners require ample opportunities to practise using counselling skills in a role-play situation. Mature learners may already be using basic helping skills in the health and social care setting, either inadvertently or in a planned way. Early formative assessment and peer review of the use of stage 1 skills will enable learners to gain confidence and develop through regular practice, observation and feedback.

Self-awareness exercises are a key tool in familiarising learners with the techniques to use to reflect on their use of helping skills. Examples include applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Need (already introduced in *Unit 8: Psychological Perspectives in Health and Social Care*) and the JOHARI window to their own life experiences as a way of attempting to understand the needs of others. It is important to note the extent to which learners' self-awareness can develop and increase significantly through studying this unit. Emerging self-awareness can evoke previously unrecognised vulnerabilities in the individual. As part of the introduction to this unit, learners should be advised of the types of support mechanisms and self-referral options available via the centre and elsewhere.

The JOHARI window should be covered early in the unit to help both learners and tutor to ascertain the existing level of self-awareness and their ability to utilise this model within their toolkit of helping skills.

For underpinning knowledge relating to helping relationships, use Gerard Egan's helping model of problem management and Carl Rogers' core conditions as starting points. Delivery should start with stage 1 skills with progression to the skills of stage 2, in which a potential client is helped to see themselves and their situation from a new perspective and to focus on what changes can be made to be more effective. At stage 3, the potential client is helped to consider possible ways to act, to look at costs and consequences, to plan action, implement it and evaluate it.

An awareness of the application of the skills related to using modern technology, for example online, internet and messaging, phone helplines, should be encouraged. Learners must have a commitment to and demonstrate equal opportunities, non-discriminatory practice and cross-cultural counselling.

## Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Unit introduction.
Tutor input: self-awareness and facilitating client growth and change through the application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs within the helping relationship. The knowledge gained in <i>Unit 8: Psychological Perspectives in Health and Social Care</i> to be developed further in relation to learners' needs as an employee in a health and social care setting and to the needs of clients. Learner activity: produce a summary case study (real or imagined) of a client's needs as a result of neglect in one or more areas of basic need.
Tutor input/discussion: exploring the limitations of a helping relationship; identify the key differences between helping using counselling skills and becoming a professional counsellor. Consider the scope and limitations of the skilled helper. Learner activity: learners to consider the broad differences between the work of and professional trainings for psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, therapeutic counsellors and skilled helpers. Reflect on the limitations of the skilled helper and identify the HSC services most likely to refer clients to each type of helper and therapist giving a summary of the reasons why.
Workshop: use of the JOHARI window to increase own self-awareness and use the technique within the context of a helping relationship. This enables people to understand an individual better and enable appropriate support to be provided where needed. This tool can be used by a skilled helper for self-awareness and for the benefit of clients. Learner activity: work with a partner as 'client'; using questioning techniques and listening skills ask for a summary of their life experiences in relation to what they know well about themselves, what they have recently learned about themselves and where they think their character differs from someone they know well. Repeat the exercise this time reversing the roles. Complete the JOHARI window for the client and feed back your views using paraphrasing and summarising skills. Receive feedback as a client and reflect on this via a written journal.

## Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Skills practice: the skills taught in this unit are linked in part to Gerard Egan's model of problem management *The Skilled Helper*. Through demonstration and role play, learners can evaluate the use of this model as a helping tool in health and social care settings, and relate it to their own emerging skills.

Learners will develop an understanding of counselling skills, practise using them regularly (in each teaching session throughout the unit). They will relate them to their own working and/or helping situations.

Activity and assessment opportunity: each teaching session should include at least one opportunity to carry out each of the following:

- practise skills through role play
- observe another learner's role play
- offer and receive feedback.

Immediate written feedback can be encouraged using a standard template covering relevant assessment criteria for learner use and tutor observations.

Each role-play session can be written up as a reflective log, encouraging learners to demonstrate reflection in relation to the criteria.

Link reflections directly to either the learner's existing, or proposed, area of work in a health and social care setting. Tutor supplied case studies are also extremely useful for learners who have not had sector-specific employment or work experience. Identify the strengths of the application of skills through self-reflection, peer review and tutor feedback.

### **Assignment 1: Developing and monitoring the use of counselling skills (P1, M1, M2, D1)**

### **Assignment 2: Maintaining client interactions and feedback (P2, M2, M3, D1, D2)**

Effective listening and questioning techniques.

Demonstration/DVD: at the earliest opportunity, either demonstrate in person, or show a video such as that of Carl Rogers, to illustrate effective listening and questioning techniques.

Learner activity: through effective use of peer feedback, identify any weaknesses in skills and ability to focus on particular questioning techniques. Highlight this particular skill or technique for further development and feedback by directing observers to identifying them in practice.

Tutor input: explore the impact of non-adherence to the boundaries of an ethical helping relationship.

Learner activity and assessment opportunity: provide learners with case studies of unethical helping scenarios (real, published or fictitious). Ask them to review the impact and monitor their own practice and the practice of peers in order to be aware of any interactions that are not effectively bounded.

### **Assignment 3: When can counselling enhance a client care plan? (P4, P5, D2)**

Identification of own and others' consider a range of effective and ineffective problem-solving and decision-making techniques.

Learner activity: identification of own and others' effective problem-solving and decision-making techniques by producing a life storyline illustrating times in their life when they had a problem and/or a difficult decision to make. Indicate the solutions they reached and reflect on how effective these were. Describe how situations of others might differ from their own, and say why they think the solutions that may or may not have worked for them might be effective or ineffective for others and their situations.

### **Assignment 4: Review of client interactions (P3, D1, D2)**

Tutor input: client referral – identifying and accessing effective and accessible sources of referral.

Learner activity: select three client scenarios likely to be encountered in a range of health and social care settings. Clarify the point at which a skilled helper might reach the limits of their abilities to work effectively with the client(s) in question. Research and suggest sources of referral and practise how to suggest alternative referral options to clients.

## Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Self-reflection: learners will need to grasp the direct link between increased self-awareness as the basis on which they will be able to assist others effectively to know and understand themselves better.

Learner activity: produce a reflective journal detailing the development of skills practice and growing awareness of self and others as a result of the learning experience.

Unit review and assessment.

## Assessment

Evidence may be in the form of role play, video and audio tapes with transcripts and process notes of practice sessions. Role play and simulation need to be focused, to enable learners to acquire appropriate skills and demonstrate the Egan Three-Stage Model. Assessment should be undertaken via a review of process notes, tutor observation, peer observations (preferably using standardised models for feedback for example sheets listing skills demonstrated), self-reflection (for example discursive review of skills and journaling), and tutor based. Tutors and learners should keep a record of the skills demonstrated as the programme progresses in either visual or written form, ensuring the confidentiality of the client at all times.

The underpinning knowledge for this unit is based on, though not rigidly adherent to, Gerard Egan's 3 stage problem management model of helping and Carl Rogers' client-centred approach to relationship development. Learners will be assessed on their ability to use these models in helping interactions. They will evaluate their developing use of these skills in their role as helpers in both real-life and simulated situations.

Ample opportunity must be given for learners to practise and demonstrate a developing insight into applying the effective use of helping skills in a range of roles in the health and social care sector. The potential to identify possibilities for improved outcomes for clients who are helped in this way will be a key area for the development of learners' skills and their contextual application.

Drawing on their own experiences in their work or personal settings, learners will use role plays and scenarios to practise their skills and consider how these may apply to a working situation in the health and social care sectors. However there is no requirement to practise on patients/users of services.

## Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, M2, D1	Developing and monitoring the use of counselling skills	Reflection on skills practice.	Reflective journal.
P2, M2, M3, D1, D2	Maintaining client interactions and feedback	Skills practice and role play.	Write a personal commentary on each of the feedback sheets provided by observers.
P3, D1, D2	Review of client interactions	Skills practice and role plays.	Written review.
P4, P5, D2	When can counselling enhance a client care plan?	Contextualising counselling skills in the context of a client care plan.	Provide a commentary on an existing care plan (case study).

## Links to National Occupational Standards (NOS), other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Health and Social Care sector suite (see *Appendix A*) and has links with units from other qualifications in that suite. See *Appendix E* for NOS links and *Appendix G* for a mapping of the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework against particular units in this qualification.

### Essential resources

The following resources are essential for delivery of this unit:

- an appropriately qualified person, such as an experienced counselling skills trainer who has undertaken counselling skills training beyond the level required for this unit, ideally to professional practitioner level
- an appropriately furnished room to ensure a setting conducive to relative privacy for the teaching group. It should be large enough to allow for skills practice and assessment (smaller rooms may be useful for diads or triadic groups (practice client/counsellor/observer))
- access to video/audio recording and viewing equipment
- library resources to provide the key texts, journals and videos.

Web research provides access to a range of internet information sources. Learners must use this resource with care, justifying the use of, and where necessary referencing any information gathered. This is particularly significant since there is a wide range of published and non-published information available on the internet.

### Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Counselling skills are used in a variety of health and social care contexts and individuals frequently find themselves being an informal 'listening ear' to clients and patients.

During work experience placements or work-related activities, learners can be encouraged to observe other professionals using counselling skills but not actively encouraged to practise their own skills in this setting. Rather, they should be aware of when they occur naturally within their working and helping relationships.

Speakers from a range of professional counselling organisations and those with client and patient contact in health and social care settings can give an insight into and help learners to distinguish between the roles of a skilled helper and professional counsellor.

Real-life case studies can be anonymised and used for the essential role-play activities in this unit.

## Indicative reading for learners

### Textbooks

Egan G – *The Skilled Helper: A Problem-Management and Opportunity-Development Approach to Helping, 9th Edition* (Thomson Brooks/Cole, 2009) ISBN 9780495601890

Egan G – *The Skilled Helper: Exercises* (Wadsworth, 2006) ISBN 9780495804550

Maslow A H – *Motivation and Personality, 2nd Edition* (Longman Asia, 1987) ISBN 9780060419875

Mearns D and Thorne B – *Person-centred Counselling in Action* (Sage, 2007) ISBN 9781412928557

Nelson-Jones R – *Basic Counselling Skills – A Helper's Manual* (Sage, 2007) ISBN 9781412947473

Rogers C – *On Becoming a Person (Chapter 3 The Characteristics of a Helping Relationship)* (Constable, 2004) ISBN 9781845290573

Stretch B and Whitehouse M – *BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Health and Social Care Student Book 1* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 9781846907663

Stretch B and Whitehouse M – *BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Health and Social Care Student Book 2* (Pearson, 2010) ISBN 9781846907470

Sutton J and Stewart W – *Learning to Counsel: Develop the Skills, Insight and Knowledge to Counsel Others, 2nd Edition* (How To Books Ltd, 2008) ISBN 9781845283254

Wosket V – *Egan's Skilled Helper Model: Developments and Applications in Counselling* (Routledge, 2006) ISBN 9781583912041

### For learners wishing to develop a broader understanding of theoretical approaches:

Corey G – *Student Manual for Theory and Practice of Counselling and Psychotherapy* (Wadsworth, 2008) ISBN 9780495102090

### Journals and magazines

*British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy Journal*

*Community Care Magazine*

### Websites

[www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (training resources)

[www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)

Department for Children Schools and Families

[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

Department of Health

[www.f-e-t-t.co.uk/An%20Introduction%20to%20the%20Egan%20Model.pdf](http://www.f-e-t-t.co.uk/An%20Introduction%20to%20the%20Egan%20Model.pdf)

Web article – Nelson-Patrick J.M An Easy Introduction to Egan's Skilled Helper

[www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)

Skills for Health National Occupational Standards for Psychological Therapies 2009

[www.tcc.tv](http://www.tcc.tv)

The Counselling Channel (counselling lectures and interviews)

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

search counselling skills videos

[www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=Counselling+Skills+Lecture&search\\_type=&q=f](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Counselling+Skills+Lecture&search_type=&q=f)

Counselling skills lectures – basic counselling concepts to Foundation Degree level

## Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>Independent enquirers</b>	[IE3,5] describing boundary issues in a counselling skills interaction within a health and social care setting
<b>Creative thinkers</b>	[CT5] trying out alternatives when demonstrating counselling skills
<b>Reflective learners</b>	[RL3] reviewing strengths and weaknesses of own counselling skills development and practice. [RL4] inviting feedback on their demonstration of counselling skills and dealing positively with praise and criticism
<b>Team workers</b>	[TW3] explaining the importance of referral to other organisations
<b>Self-managers</b>	[SM1,2] seeking out challenges and working towards goals when researching the processes for initiating, establishing, maintaining, developing and concluding a counselling relationship [SM5,6,7] dealing with competing pressures, responding positively to change, managing emotions and building relationships when demonstrating the use of counselling skills in a simulated environment
<b>Effective participators</b>	[EP3] proposing practical ways to initiate, establish, maintain, develop and conclude a counselling relationship [EP4] identifying improvements that would benefit the client, trying to influence the client and balancing diverse views when demonstrating the use of counselling skills in a simulated environment.

## ● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>ICT – Use ICT systems</b>	
Follow and understand the need for safety and security practices	recording and securely retaining counselling interactions and feedback
<b>ICT – Find and select information</b>	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	using the internet to research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the impact on client outcomes when used as part of a care plan</li> <li>boundary issues in a counselling skills interaction within a health and social care setting</li> </ul>
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	using the internet to research the impact on client outcomes when used as part of a care plan using findings in written work and feedback acquiring an awareness of the use of modern technologies within helping relationships
<b>ICT – Develop, present and communicate information</b>	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>text and tables</li> <li>images</li> <li>numbers</li> <li>records</li> </ul>	using word processing software to produce assessment evidence
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	keeping secure records of clients and client interaction
<b>English</b>	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	participating in counselling role plays as helper and observer providing constructive feedback to helper when functioning in an observer role
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	using recommended reading to assist with understanding and development of counselling skills
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	producing a reflective journal linking written work to assessment criteria.