

## Level 4 Counselling Embarking on Practice January 2018

### Introduction

77 scripts were received from 12 Centres. The question paper was designed to test candidates'

- knowledge and understanding of ONE of the three main approaches to counselling and how this theoretical understanding will influence their counselling practice

The relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria are shown below

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
<b>The learner will:</b>	<b>The learner can:</b>
<b>1. Understand key concepts of the chosen core theoretical model</b>	1.1. Summarise the key concepts of the core theoretical model 1.2. Evaluate the key interventions of the core theoretical model 1.3. Develop self-awareness in relation to the core theoretical model
<b>2. Understand the strengths and limitations of the chosen core theoretical model</b>	2.1. Summarise the key strengths of the core theoretical model 2.2. Summarise the key limitations of the core theoretical model
<b>3. Understand the process and practice of counselling within the core theoretical model</b>	3.1. Evaluate the skills required to establish the counselling relationship within the core theoretical model 3.2. Evaluate the skills required for developing and sustaining the counselling relationship within the core theoretical model 3.3. Evaluate the skills required for reviewing and concluding the counselling relationship within the core theoretical model
<b>4. Understand the importance of supervision in counselling practice</b>	4.1. Analyse how supervision helps to monitor, support and challenge ethical practice 4.2. Explain the key benefits of the supervisor-supervisee relationship 4.3. Evaluate the contribution of supervision to the client-counsellor relationship

The style of the paper was the same as in previous series – client scenario followed by questions. Questions were focussed on, though not entirely limited to, the Indicative Content to be found in the Qualification Specification.

The paper contained a total of 4 questions and the mark distribution against the assessment criteria is shown below.

## Distribution of marks against questions

Question	Number of marks	Criteria Covered
1	12	3.1, 1.3
2	9	1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2
3a	12	4.3, 4.1, 4.2
3b	12	4.3, 4.1, 4.2
4a	9	3.2
4b	6	3.3
Total	60	

## Comments

### Question 1

Candidates who scored highly in this question set about choosing concrete issues gleaned from the scenario and discussed how these might impact on Mandip's counselling. Very good answers were characterised by discussions of the potential for breach of client's confidentiality if an investigation into Peter's conduct is undertaken and/or an exploration of feelings about the blurred boundaries in the organisation – e.g. therapist to Peter is your supervisor and placement manager.

Most of the answers were rather general and not related to the scenario. Some were so general they could be applied to any scenario. It is important that candidates understand that in this examination the answers must contain detailed reference to the situation. They must attempt to put themselves in the shoes of the counsellor.

### Question 2

Candidates who scored highly in this question set about choosing three interventions, naming them and then carefully explaining how they would help (or not) with the situation that was presented with Mandip. In some instances, there was evidence that candidates had pre-prepared an answer to the questions set in June (some went as far to use the name of the client in that series) and repeated these in this examination. Obviously, these answers were, at best too general to be worthy of higher scores and, at worst too tangential. In the person-centred approach answers, those that chose to write about any of the six necessary and sufficient conditions were mostly about definitions and missed an opportunity to gain higher marks because they did not discuss how they might be useful to Mandip in arriving at a decision.

### Question 3

3 (a) This question was designed to test the candidate's knowledge of the importance of appropriate and ethical supervisory support for their practice. Good answers were characterised by close reference to the scenario and paid attention to the predicament that Mandip found herself in. Specifically, discussing a procedure for supporting Mandip over the longer term, especially if she was feeling that she might be tempted back to drinking. It would also have been important to assess the strength of the supervisory relationship and make a decision about disclosure of the Mandip/Peter situation. In coming to a decision, the potential for contaminating Peter's therapeutic relationship would need to be considered alongside perhaps seeking external supervision about the Mandip/Peter situation.

3 (b) This question elicited some surprisingly poor answers in that lists together with definitions of ethical principles and/or personal moral qualities (PMQs) were given. These answers were not considered worthy of credit as it required candidates to APPLY their knowledge of an ethical framework.

## Question 4

4 (a) Generally, this question was answered well, and candidates used appropriate ideas from their core theoretical model and/or appropriate skills to describe how the relationship with Mandip would be sustained. Very good answers were closely related to the information given in the scenario and considered Mandip's goal of long-term sobriety alongside her wish for a relationship.

4 (b) As has been noted before, candidates usually have a good grasp of the ending process and some were able to use this knowledge and show how some of these processes would also be facilitative in a review. Obvious strategies were:

- Allow client to express thoughts and feelings of work to date
- Establish a further 'agenda' for the remaining 3 sessions
- Carefully explore any gaps between client's stated reasons/plans/goals at outset and now
- Start to prepare for ending if needs have been met/ research on-going support and be prepared to refer if not

## Recommendations

### Centres are recommended to:

Encourage candidates to try and imagine themselves in the role of counsellor to the client in the scenario as if they were about to **embark on practice with this client** and respond from this vantage point.

Remind candidates that whilst the format of the paper will be the same, client scenario followed by questions, the questions can and will vary. Prepared answers to previous examinations are unlikely to be helpful (or successful). Close reference to the client and the presenting issues in the scenario is essential for success.

Ensure that permission is obtained, and evidence of this provided, for the use of scribes or word processing in the examination.

# Principal Examiner's Report

*For centre staff*



Encourage candidates to make every effort to write in a legible fashion, difficult though this can be under exam conditions.

When teaching person-centred theory, encourage students to gain an understanding of the necessary and sufficient conditions that go beyond simply being able to list the 3 best known of them.

Make sure that candidates are using the most up to date version of the ethical framework or code used on the course.