

Level 4 Counselling Embarking on Practice June 2018

Introduction

86 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
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand key concepts of the chosen core theoretical model	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
2. Understand the strengths and limitations of the chosen core theoretical model	2.1. Summarise the key strengths of the core theoretical model 2.2. Summarise the key limitations of the core theoretical model
3. Understand the process and practice of counselling within the core theoretical model	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
4. Understand the importance of supervision in counselling practice	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

Principal Examiner's Report

For centre staff



The style of the paper was the same as in previous series – client scenario followed by questions. However, the design of the space for answers provided more scaffolding for the candidates and this was reflected in greater clarity of written responses and less general description in the hope of gaining some marks

The paper contained a total of 5 questions and the mark distribution against the assessment criteria is shown below.

Distribution of marks against questions

Question	Number of marks	Criteria Covered
1	9	1.1, 1.2, 1.3
2	6	2.1, 2.2
3a	3	4.1, 1.3
3b	3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3
3c	3	4.1, 4.2
4a	15	3.2
4b	15	1.3, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2
5	6	3.2
Total	60	

Comments

Overall, the standards achieved by candidates in this examination were considered by the examiners to be relatively high compared to previous series and to comparable tests held elsewhere.

The majority of candidates succeeded in attempting all the questions in the time available.

Question 1

Candidates who scored highly in this question followed the answer rubric and linked their chosen concepts to Nadenka's situation. Poor answers were characterised by irrelevant description of the candidates some not too far from dictionary definitions and little else. 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 scenario. They must attempt to put themselves in the shoes of the counsellor that would be working with Nadenka

Question 2

Candidates who scored highly in this questions set about by choosing one concept (a few misunderstood the question and were still working with a whole group of concepts as outlined in question one and could explain its strengths and limitations in the context of the work with Nadenka.

Question 3

3 (a) This question was answered very well overall. It seemed that candidates had taken the advice to try and put themselves in the shoes of the counsellor as indicated by the rubric. Many scored the full three marks by identifying the issues from the scenario and discussing the likely impact on the relationship of the decision to loan the bus fare (or not). Much of this discussion, in the stronger answers was linked to the ethical dimensions as well as boundary implications.

3 (b) Most candidates could link their thinking in (a) to problems of maintaining the therapeutic alliance and giving specific examples such as contractual boundaries and Nadenka feeling beholden to the counsellor. Weaker answers were characterised by vague description or suggesting a problem-solving approach for Nadenka which did not answer the question set

3 (c) This question elicited some surprisingly good answers with accurate reflections on both boundary issues and ethical principles that demonstrated think the situation through and do the best to preserve the relationship.

Question 4

4 (a) This question was designed to elicit candidates understanding of building a working therapeutic relationship and then how unexpected events may rupture that relationship – as might be expected in the 'real world'. Generally, the structure of the answer rubric assisted candidates in this task. Many were easily able to identify three thoughts/feelings about the new information and reflect on how that might impact the ending process. It was pleasing to note that the best answers were also characterised by suggestion about how to mitigate the negative effects of a sudden ending.

4 (b) Here again most candidates demonstrated their awareness of appropriate endings for clients and how handled carefully and considerately these could preserve future counselling relationships. Some candidates seemed to have jumped the gun somewhat by answering this on overly complicated and detailed answer to part (a) and either struggled to complete this section or repeated themselves.

Candidates should be advised to read all parts of a question before attempting to answer it, if not the whole examination paper.

Question 5

Most candidates could effectively discuss the key skills required to re-build and sustain the therapeutic alliance. Weaker answers were characterised by vague statements such as: "I would offer her empathy, congruence and UPR" without going on to illustrate how these might be useful or necessary for the task at hand.

Recommendations

Centres are recommended to:

Continue 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.

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

Remind candidates that whilst the format of the paper will be the same, client scenario followed 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.

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

Discourage candidates from using extra sheets. The space on the printed paper indicates the maximum expected. Rarely is anything worthy of credit found in the extra sheets.