

AIM Awards Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills June 2016

Report on the Examination

Introduction

210 scripts were received from 15 centres. The question paper was designed to test the candidate's:

- Understanding of the role of counselling skills in a helping relationship
- Knowledge about initiating a counselling interaction
- Knowledge of how to develop and maintain a counselling interaction
- Ability to conclude a counselling interaction

The relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria are shown below:

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand the role of counselling skills in a helping relationship	1.1. Define what is meant by counselling skills 1.2. Identify the place of counselling on a helping continuum
2. Know about initiating a counselling interaction	2.1. Identify key elements in a counselling contract 2.2. Identify key skills for rapport building
3. Know how to develop and maintain a counselling interaction	3.1. Identify the skills needed to develop and maintain the counselling relationship 3.2. Demonstrate the skills needed to develop and maintain the counselling relationship 3.3. Identify positive ways of moving the counselling relationship forward 3.4. Identify negative ways of moving the counselling relationship forward
4. Be able to conclude a counselling interaction	4.1. Describe the importance of endings in a counselling interaction

Questions were focused on, though not entirely limited to, the Indicative Content found in the Qualification Specification.

Distribution of Marks against Questions

Question	Number of Marks	Criteria Covered
1.	6	1.2
2.	5	2.1
3.	7	1.1
4.	9	2.2
5.	6	3.3
6.	6	4.1
Total	39	

Markers Comments and Feedback

Question 1 required true or false responses. There were six sub questions and the majority of candidates did very well on these. E and F of this question were areas in which candidates struggled the most, but again the majority of candidates passed.

Question 2 was split into a two sub sections. In Part A (multiple choice questions), candidates did very well on these questions. Part B was an open question in which the candidate had to state when a counsellor would legally have to break confidentiality. A significant number of candidates struggled with this question. Of the candidates that struggled with this question, a majority of these candidates said that it was acceptable to break confidentiality if there was any risk to the client, counsellor or a third party. This is not a legal reason to break confidentiality unless this was qualified as a serious risk.

Question 3, a multiple choice question, was split into four sub questions and then a question and example. As a whole, candidates did very well at the multiple choice question with a large number of candidates gaining 75%, or above, correct. Question 3b, which required an example of an open question, saw a limited number of candidates struggle to give an open question. Frequent incorrect responses were “Can you...” or “Would you...”. The majority of candidates were, however, able to explain the reason open questions are used.

Question 4 was a scenario situation where candidates had to state what they would change to help towards establishing a good working relationship. The answers to this question, as a whole, were very good. It should be noted that a number of candidates altered the scenario, or extrapolated from the

scenario, to give a change that might not be possible or might have already happened. Aside from the select few who did not follow the scenario, the majority of answers to this question were very good.

Question 5 was a single open question about how to work towards an ending. The question required an example and an explanation. It was clear from the work presented that the majority of candidates were able to answer this question and the majority scored very highly on this question. However, it should be noted that a minority of candidates did not focus on an ending, but instead focused on a process to open up the counselling interaction and to explore the client's world more. The question was intended to focus on the end of counselling as a whole, and not the end of a session, and some candidates focused on the end of a session. Credit was nevertheless given when marking this if convincing understanding of theory was shown, even when a candidate had not given the expected response to the question set.

Question 6 was a single open question to cover what the counsellor needs to do to close a counselling interaction and why. A select few candidates, as with the question above, did not focus on an ending, but instead focused on a process to open up the counselling interaction and to explore the client's material in more depth rather than how to conduct an ending. The response of summarise was given a number of times, and this is not an acceptable response to have as a tool to close a counselling interaction, however in a number of explanations it was clear that the candidate was actually explaining a review of work carried out and as such credit was given.

Recommendations

Centres are recommended to:

Ensure that candidates are clear about the legal basis of breaking confidentiality.

Ensure that candidates understand the correct use of a summary.

Encourage that candidates read the question set very carefully to make sure that they are answering what is being asked of them.

Be aware that future examinations will be using the most up to date Ethical Frameworks/Codes [e.g. BACP 2016]