

Unit Title: **Approaches to Couples Counselling**

Please note that this unit is expiring from any new learner registrations on 31/12/2019. Please contact AIM Awards for information on replacement qualifications on 01332 341822.

Unit Level:	Four
Unit Guided Learning Hours:	60
Ofqual Unit Reference Number:	R/506/3106
Unit End Date:	31/12/2019
Unit Sector:	1.3 Health and Social Care

Unit Summary

This unit will provide learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for this special area of practice. Learners will consider the particular issues counsellors confront when working with couples and how different counselling theories may affect both the process and outcome of couples counselling.

Unit Information

It is expected that before the unit is delivered, the tutor will have read the Qualification Specification to ensure all conditions regarding Rules of Combination, delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance are fulfilled. Additional guidance is available below as Assessment Guidance for Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria in **bold**.

This unit has 5 learning outcomes

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand the theoretical models of couples counselling	1.1. Clarify the term couples counselling 1.2. Critically compare the key components of models of couples therapy 1.3. Summarise the key ideas that the major schools of counselling and psychotherapy hold in relation to couples counselling
2. Understand the context of couples counselling	2.1. Illustrate the use and application of counselling skills for couples counselling 2.2. Assess the use and application of counselling skills for couples counselling
3. Understand ethical practice when working with couples	3.1. Review key challenges to ethical practice when working with couples

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LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
4. Understand risk management in a counselling interaction	4.1. Assess potential key risks to the: (a) counsellor (b) clients
5. Know about an awareness of self in relation to others in working with couples	5.1. Identify ways in which self-awareness has developed in working with couples

Assessment

This unit is assessed by an internally set and assessed journal of up to 800 words per session.

Indicative Content

Learning Outcome 1

Theoretical models: must include recent developments in the field and the potential for further specialised training.

1.1 Couples counselling: brief history of couples counselling to elicit understanding of its position in the counselling field and acknowledge changing terminology and focus on outcome.

1.2 Key components: potential and/or emotional, behavioural, psychological and cognitive issues that present in the counselling space. Of particular importance is a focus upon psychological aspects of perception, personality, attraction and value systems. Introduction to aspects of Bowlby's theories around attachment. An introduction to potential manifestations of conflict, to include poor communication, infidelity, blaming.

1.3 Major schools: cognitive-behavioural, humanistic, psychodynamic. Broad knowledge of key components of specific approaches to counselling couples. To include, but not limited to Systemic couples and family therapy, emotionally focussed therapy, Rational Emotive Therapy and Solution Focussed Brief Therapy. Overview of Humanistic, Cognitive Behavioural and Psychodynamic approaches and belief systems in relation to counselling couples.

Learning Outcome 2

Context of couples counselling: appropriate skills and strategies for working with couples, within the framework of their chosen approach. Reflection on the potential for collusion with one party, and strategies to mitigate this should also be a focus.

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Core skills to promote opportunities to re-establish communication (as a potential presenting issue). Skills of paraphrasing and reflection in relation to the need for all parties to be 'heard'.

Appropriate skills for building and maintaining the relationship. Focus to be on building and maintaining the relationship with the couple, and to promote the building and maintenance of their relationship should that be an established goal. Appropriate skills to develop a working alliance, and focus on this skill with couples as opposed to working with the individual client.

Knowledge of appropriate endings for clients with this presenting issue.

Knowledge of appropriate systems for referral if necessary and the potential dynamics surrounding this when working with couples. Particular focus should be given to competence when working in this specialised area, and acknowledgment of the need to refer clients for other specialised areas e.g. Sex therapy.

Learning Outcome 3

Ethical practice: specific focus should be placed on the potential issues and dynamics of contracting with a couple. Learners will need support to locate and reflect upon strategies to ensure the most ethical and practical contracts in the situation.

Learning Outcome 4

Risk management: consideration should be given to potential health and safety aspects for both client and counsellor when counselling couples.

Learning Outcome 5

Awareness of self: consideration of self-care in relation to potential work in this area. Encouraging self-awareness in relation couples counselling and individual growth.

Reading List

Required Reading

Bobes, T & Rothman, B. (2002) **Doing couples Therapy: Integrating Theory with Practice** (2nd Ed). New York: Norton.

Bubbenzer, D.L. (1993) **Counselling Couples**. London: Sage.

O'Leary, C.J. (1999) **Counselling Couples and Families: a person Centred Approach**. London: Sage.

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Payne, M (2010) **Couple Counselling: A Practical Guide**. London: Sage.

Recommended Reading

Bond, T. (2010) **Standards and Ethics for Counselling in Action** (3rd Ed). London: Sage.

Cozolino, L (2002) **The Neuroscience of Psychotherapy**. New York: Norton.

Ladd, P. (2007) **Relationships and Patterns of Conflict Resolution: A reference book for Couples Counselling** University Press of America.

EXPIRING