

AIM Awards Level 5 Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling June 2018 Series

Introduction

12 scripts were received, all from the same Centre. The very small entry for this paper means that few reliable statistical conclusions can be drawn from this entry.

The question paper was designed to test candidates' knowledge and understanding of the use of Counselling Supervision: Ethical and Legal Issues; and Research in Counselling.

The relevant learning outcomes and assessment criteria are shown below

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
Unit Title: Counselling Supervision, Ethical and Legal Issues	
1. Understand theoretical aspects of counselling supervision	1.1. Critically evaluate the different: (a) forms (b) styles (c) models of counselling supervision
2. Understand practical aspects of counselling supervision	2.1. Demonstrate increasing self-awareness as a result of the use of counselling supervision 2.2. Analyse how the process of supervision can affect the counsellor-client relationship and clinical outcomes
3. Understand key ethical and legal issues for counsellors	3.1. Review the impact of key ethical and legal issues on counselling practice 3.2. Critically evaluate working within an ethical framework or code of ethics
Unit Title: Research in Counselling	
1. Understand the field of counselling research	1.1. Review and evaluate key aspects of counselling research

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

The Mark Scheme for this paper is partly generic, grading responses in terms of Academic Skills and Application of Content, at levels of Good Pass, a Pass, Borderline and Did Not Achieve. The Mark Scheme also contains examples of content which responses of a Pass standard were considered likely to contain. These examples are not prescriptive; examiners are experienced practitioners and are expected to use their professional judgment in recognising creditworthy material.

The paper contained a total of 4 questions.

Distribution of marks against questions

Question	Marks	Unit content covered	Weighting
1	20	Counselling Supervision, Ethical and Legal Issues 1.1, 2.1, 2.2	25%
2	20	Counselling Supervision, Ethical and Legal Issues 3.1,3.2	25%
3	20	Counselling Supervision, Ethical and Legal Issues 3.1,3.2	25%
4	20	Research in Counselling 1.1,1.2,3.1,3.3,4.1	25%
Total	80		

Comments

Overall, the standards achieved by most candidates in this examination were considered by the examiners to be very similar to those found in previous series. There was a tendency for some candidates to confine themselves to generalised answers with limited relevance to the actual questions posed.

Question 1 asked candidates to choose one of three main purposes of clinical supervision, namely to advance supervisee professional development, safeguard client welfare and provide for gatekeeping in the profession. They were then asked to relate this to their own experience of using supervision. Approximately 50% of candidates chose supervisee professional development and the others focussed on safeguarding client welfare.

Overall, this question was answered reasonably well. All candidates were able to give convincing examples from their experience, and some explained clearly how the counsellor-client relationship and clinical outcomes were affected.

Question 2 was on the whole answered well, with some notable exceptions. It provided a scenario where a counsellor faced ethical issues concerning a client having sold a controlled substance to “some young friends” . Most candidates succeeded in identifying the relevance of the ethical principles of beneficence, autonomy and non-maleficence together with relevant legislation and the impact on the client-counsellor relationship. Four candidates were convinced that this was definitely an example of a mandatory duty to report to the police, because of legislation such as the s52 Drug Trafficking Act 1994 and Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. Authoritative sources including Peter Jenkins (Counselling, Psychotherapy and the Law, Sage, 2012) are clear that therapists are not required to report clients who sell illegal drugs as opposed to those who are involved in money laundering as a result. The stronger candidates showed their awareness of this important point. Two candidates did not notice that the unspecified age of the “young friends” could mean there was a possible risk to people under 18.

Question 3 was well tackled by all candidates. The scenario described a counsellor being approached by an ex-client whom he found attractive with a request for friendship. All candidates showed awareness that although there was no absolute legal or ethical barrier preventing the acceptance of this invitation, to do so was fraught with risk. They were able to identify relevant ethical principles

Question 4 concerned research, and the identification and management of risk in this context. Responses were generally adequate rather than outstanding, with some struggling to identify more than a few potential examples of risks. Nevertheless all candidates showed a sufficient grasp of basic issues such as confidentiality and the safety of participants.

Overall, the examiners were satisfied with the results from this examination. There was evidence that many candidates had been well taught and prepared, and that the paper provided a fair opportunity, at an appropriate level, for students to demonstrate the results of a great deal of hard work.

Recommendations

Encourage candidates to make every effort to answer the actual question posed rather than writing generalised accounts of their understanding of the broader subject.

Ensure that all candidates are aware of legal restrictions and the duty to report where drug dealing and young people are concerned.