

Overview

This unit is about ensuring all processes and procedures are followed. It will require you to record relevant information from sessions in accordance with your organisational requirements. The unit will also require you to consider your client's needs with regards to the environment in which the counselling is conducted. You will have knowledge of your organisation's Health and Safety procedures and be able to assess risk to yourself or the client. You will need to understand and implement procedures for sharing information with other services. You will need to be able to monitor and evaluate your personal caseload. This unit will also require you to evaluate your own practice and to acquire and review feedback from a variety of sources. In addition you will be required to make judgement with regards to referrals, you will need to explain and discuss referral with the client.

There are six elements to this unit

1. Record and maintain case notes
2. Provide an appropriate counselling environment
3. Liaise with other services
4. Monitor evaluate and review your personal caseload
5. Evaluate own practice
6. Work with referrals

This unit is relevant to those working in the following counselling contexts though it recognised that some aspects would be given more in depth attention by managers:

1. Institutions
2. Statutory Services
3. VCS (Voluntary Community Sector Services)
4. Social Enterprises
5. Individual Practice
6. Commercial Enterprises

All units within the suite of National Occupational Standards for Counselling are not specific to any theoretical model.

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Performance criteria

Record and maintain case notes

You must be able to:

- P1 clearly communicate to the client, the policy and/or requirement for recording information and information-sharing protocol
- P2 record all relevant information from the session and any actions undertaken
- P3 use relevant guidance, documentation and systems to record case notes
- P4 ensure case notes are structured to provide a full record with clear, accessible and legible information
- P5 demonstrate a critical understanding of how to apply current knowledge of counselling interventions via case notes
- P6 comply with relevant legislation, organisational and ethical frameworks and guidelines
- P7 store information securely, respecting confidentiality of clients and other agencies

Provide an appropriate counselling environment

You must be able to:

- P8 be aware of the needs of the client when designing/selecting the environment for conducting counselling
- P9 create a safe environment in which to interact with clients
- P10 create an environment that is welcoming, consistent with the ethos, needs and perspective of your client group
- P11 be aware of self-disclosure and ways in which it is manifest in the counselling therapeutic environment
- P12 ensure that all areas conform to legal requirements of health and safety
- P13 be aware of procedures to follow in the event of threats to client or counsellor safety
- P14 contribute to the development, review and implementation of policies and procedures relating to the management of risk

Liaise with other services

You must be able to:

- P15 establish or use established criteria for exchanging information with other services, ensuring that such criteria are communicated clearly to clients where appropriate
- P16 discuss with the client the process for exchanging information and the involvement of clients, where their consent is required or sought and in what circumstances it may be breached and why.
- P17 clearly identify roles and responsibilities of participants when exchanging
- P18 identify relevance and appropriateness of information that is shared with others
- P19 liaise with other services and confirm that the information shared is

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- appropriate to their requirements
- P20 record appropriately information provided to and obtained from other services
- P21 use appropriate procedures to access relevant sources of information
- P22 determine the methods that should be used for obtaining information
- P23 ensure that all agencies involved are aware of values and guidance of the ethical framework of your service

Monitor, evaluate and review your personal caseload

- You must be able to:*
- P24 recognise and understand the importance of reviewing all relevant information on your personal caseload
 - P25 develop strategies for reviewing personal caseloads
 - P26 monitor and evaluate progression in your client work
 - P27 identify challenges and difficulties in progression
 - P28 ensure that the number of clients in your caseload does not exceed your capacity
 - P29 ensure that the clients in your caseload are within your area of competence
 - P30 exchange information on cases according to the procedures of the service
 - P31 comply with all relevant legislation, codes of practice, guidelines and ethical
 - P32 consult with experts in the legal field when such guidance is required

Evaluate own practice

- You must be able to:*
- P33 demonstrate that you practice in a way that is informed by a consistent, coherent and in depth theoretical understanding
 - P34 evaluate your own and other models of counselling and therapy
 - P35 take part in systematic monitoring of your practice and client outcomes
 - P36 identify suitable criteria and evaluation tools for obtaining client feedback and to evaluate your own practice
 - P37 know how to review relevant information to evaluate your own practice
 - P38 review feedback from managers, supervisors, other professionals and clients on your own practice
 - P39 review the effect of own values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours when working as a counsellor
 - P40 manage a practice that remains open to scrutiny of peers and colleagues
 - P41 critically appraise and evaluate research

Work with referrals

- You must be able to:*
- P42 recognise your own professional limitations and make referrals where appropriate

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- P43 make professional judgements with regard to the appropriateness of referral in consultation with the client
- P44 access clear, relevant and current information on other services to which referrals might be made
- P45 assess the suitability of other services for meeting requirements of the client
- P46 interpret the acceptance criteria and procedures of other services
- P47 investigate whether other services have the capacity and resources to deal with additional clients
- P48 review referral options with the client
- P49 identify the advantages and disadvantages of the referral options for the client
- P50 give a clear explanation to the client regarding the reasons for referral to other therapists or organisations
- P51 provide sufficient information to enable clients to make informed decisions about referral
- P52 take account of and explore client's responses to referral
- P53 acknowledge own feelings about referral
- P54 discuss referral in supervision
- P55 review the boundaries of confidentiality with the client and clarify what information needs to be passed to the other service
- P56 explain clearly to the client the reasons for communicating with and/or collaborating with other professionals
- P57 obtain written permission from clients in order to share confidential client information with a third party
- P58 review referrals from other sources to determine suitability for the service
- P59 clearly communicate professional opinion to other professionals as part of the referral process

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Record and maintain case notes

- K1 Theoretical bases of counselling interventions relevant to a consistent, coherent and in-depth theoretical perspective
- K2 The importance of effective management of cases
- K3 Appropriate note and record keeping
- K4 The range and amount of information that should be recorded for different types of cases
- K5 Systems of record keeping and their importance
- K6 Legislation related to note and record keeping, confidentiality and information sharing relevant to your setting
- K7 A range of options available for record keeping and the rationale for decision making
- K8 People and groups to whom you are accountable
- K9 Procedures for ensuring safety of client records in the event of the counsellor's illness or death
- K10 Legal requirements for data protection

Provide an appropriate counselling environment

You need to know and understand:

- K11 the key parameters of a safe environment
- K12 features inappropriate to a counselling environment and the particular needs of your client group
- K13 self-disclosure and its relevance to the counsellor's theoretical perspective of therapy
- K14 an in-depth knowledge and understanding of ethical frameworks for good practice
- K15 diversity legislation with respect to access
- K16 the importance of providing an appropriate environment for the counselling frame to be established
- K17 health and safety regulations
- K18 additional organisational policies pertaining to client and counsellor safety
- K19 policies relating to the management of risk to client, self or others

Liaise with other services

You need to know and understand:

- K20 methods and procedures for exchanging information in a variety of settings and your responsibility to the client in that process
- K21 the importance of complying with procedures for exchanging information
- K22 how to decide whether the information is relevant
- K23 the importance of protecting information sources
- K24 systems for recording information

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- K25 ethical guidelines and codes of practice for sharing information across agencies
- K26 diversity legislation
- K27 secure storage systems and methods
- K28 legal requirements for data protection
- K29 availability of other relevant services
- K30 purpose, culture, ethos and priorities of other services

Monitor, evaluate and review your personal caseload

You need to know and understand:

- K31 the range of information on personal caseload that should be monitored and reviewed
- K32 when to review your personal caseload and why it is important
- K33 the rationale for recommended limits to personal caseload
- K34 where to access information to enhance your practice
- K35 how to manage and review complex and difficult cases
- K36 the limits of your competence
- K37 how to ensure that arrangements are made for a professional will
- K38 the importance of complying with national, local, professional and organisational requirements relating to diversity, discrimination, health and safety, security, confidentiality, information sharing and data protection
- K39 ethical guidance on professional wills where appropriate

Evaluate own practice

You need to know and understand:

- K40 the counselling therapeutic models that are appropriate to the setting/sector you are working in
- K41 process and outcome research and tools in counselling
- K42 evaluation criteria that could be employed
- K43 evaluation tools, instruments or questionnaires derived from a quantitative and qualitative theoretical base
- K44 factors that should be incorporated into the evaluation criteria
- K45 how to evaluate your own practice against specific criteria
- K46 how to communicate, in a clear, articulate and accessible way, evaluation findings to the professional community and the community you work within
- K47 relevant national, local, professional and organisational requirements relating to diversity and discrimination, health and safety, security, confidentiality and data protection
- K48 principles underlying professional practice

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Work with referrals

You need to know and understand:

- K49 appropriate assessment skills and how to use them
- K50 the referral procedure and the impact of referral on clients
- K51 specific referral procedures of your own and other services
- K52 requirements for recording full details of referral according to the procedures laid down by the counselling organisation where appropriate
- K53 secure systems for recording and storing data in compliance with the data protection act
- K54 a critical awareness of boundaries with regard to the extent to which confidential information should be imparted to a third party
- K55 the need for respect, transparency and inclusion with regard to the client when accessing help from other professionals
- K56 how to evaluate the suitability of other services
- K57 how to obtain information on acceptance criteria
- K58 differences in perspective between different professions
- K59 the roles and responsibilities of others in the fields of mental health, medicine, health and social care and the law
- K60 legal, ethical and organisational requirements and Codes of Practice relating to rights and confidentiality under data protection and sharing of information legislation

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