

# SFHMH100

## Establish and maintain the therapeutic relationship



---

### Overview

This standard is about building and maintaining the therapeutic relationship. The boundaries of the relationship will need to be clearly defined. You will need to communicate empathy and understanding to your client whilst working towards mutually agreed goals. You will need to understand the complications of using self in the counselling process. You must be able to identify when and how to use self-disclosure and be aware of the difficulties and dangers of insufficiently considered self-disclosure. You will need to work with diversity as part of the process of therapy and challenge behaviour that discriminates or harms others. You must be able to recognise the impact of power imbalances. You must be able to review the progress of counselling at suitable times during the therapeutic process and be able to negotiate an end date with the client allowing sufficient time to process the ending in according with your theoretical perspective. You must facilitate the client in the process of mourning at the end of counselling.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

# SFHMH100

## Establish and maintain the therapeutic relationship

---

### Performance criteria

*You must be able to:*

- P1 clearly define the boundaries of the relationship
- P2 communicate empathy and understanding of the client
- P3 demonstrate a genuine concern for your client's welfare
- P4 facilitate the expression of emotion
- P5 clearly agree roles and responsibilities with the client whilst in a counselling relationship
- P6 communicate clearly using language that is accessible and appropriate for the client
- P7 identify and work towards mutually agreed goals with your client
- P8 identify and address issues of difference and diversity in the counselling relationship including power imbalance
- P9 develop and sustain a relationship with the client that provides the safety and security required to explore complex emotional concerns
- P10 recognise autonomy of the client and respect boundaries
- P11 engage the client in collaborative team work to explore and resolve their difficulties
- P12 recognise alliance ruptures and have competency, skills and ethics to be responsive
- P13 recognise your emotional, physical and behavioural response to the client and consider ways in which it may be a response to an aspect of the client's communication
- P14 critically appraise research on the counselling alliance, particularly its relationship with outcome
- P15 demonstrate the ability to recognise your emotional response to a client and use it in accordance with your underpinning theoretical perspective
- P16 recognise the implications of using self in the counselling process
- P17 understand the role and function of self-disclosure and other uses of the self in accordance with your theoretical perspective
- P18 understand the difficulties and dangers of insufficiently considered self disclosure
- P19 assess whether it is appropriate and useful to disclose about yourself in counselling
- P20 assess whether it is appropriate and useful to disclose about your process in counselling
- P21 make an informed decision about when and how to answer client's personal questions
- P22 identify when and how to use self-disclosure to strengthen the counselling alliance
- P23 recognise when the pull towards self-disclosure may be an indicator of the psychopathology of the client
- P24 consider ways in which self-disclosure is conveyed through dress, body

## SFHMH100

### Establish and maintain the therapeutic relationship

---

- language, notices, building signs, building access, photographs and other aspects of the counselling environment along with how welcoming and respectful you/staff are to client
- P25 acknowledge diversity relating to gender, age, race, culture, language, ability, spirituality and sexuality as it impacts on the counselling relationship or the process of therapy
  - P26 acknowledge and demonstrate understanding and empathy of any inequality and discrimination experienced by the client
  - P27 apply and facilitate communication as appropriate for particular clients
  - P28 demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the impact of discrimination on mental health
  - P29 be open to own stereotypes and thinking and their potential to create a discriminatory environment for the client
  - P30 respect clients' social, cultural, political, religious background
  - P31 challenge behaviour that discriminates or harms other individuals or communities and take any appropriate action
  - P32 understand the relationship between discrimination and power at a personal and institutional level
  - P33 recognise the impact of power imbalances
  - P34 critically appreciate theory and research underlying diversity in counselling

# SFHMH100

## Establish and maintain the therapeutic relationship

---

### Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

- K1 theory and research on the working alliance
- K2 how to express empathy and understanding
- K3 how to establish trust at the beginning of the counselling relationship
- K4 how to agree roles and responsibilities with client
- K5 theory and practice that takes account of diversity
- K6 the ethical framework for your profession
- K7 optimal interaction between therapist and client linked to favourable outcome
- K8 theory and research related to therapeutic alliance ruptures
- K9 theories of relationship dynamics
- K10 non verbal communication
- K11 a consistent, coherent and in depth theoretical perspective
- K12 the use of self in counselling as appropriate to the theoretical model of practice
- K13 theories of self-disclosure
- K14 timing of self-disclosure
- K15 relevant legal, national, ethical and organisational requirements, policies and codes of practice
- K16 the importance of acknowledging and working with your emotional response to the counselling whether disclosed or not
- K17 psychopathology, including borderline personality disorders
- K18 a working knowledge of self-awareness
- K19 in-session negative impacts and ways of processing them
- K20 the impact of discrimination and prejudice on mental health
- K21 relevant theories and practice of cross cultural counselling
- K22 relevant theories and practice of counselling in relation to spirituality
- K23 relevant theories and practice of counselling in relation to children, young people and older adults
- K24 relevant theories and practice of counselling in relation to sexual and gender identity
- K25 relevant theories and practice of counselling in relation to any disability
- K26 relevant legal, national, ethical and organisational requirements, policies and codes of practice
- K27 different cultures and subcultures including lifestyle, 'race', gender, sexuality and age
- K28 different religions and how they may influence clients' life-choices
- K29 how to conduct a non-discriminatory approach to professional and therapeutic counselling relationships
- K30 relevant theories of power imbalance between counsellor and client
- K31 relevant diversity legislation and human rights legislation

# SFHMH100

## Establish and maintain the therapeutic relationship

---

### Additional Information

#### External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004)

Dimension: Core 1 Communication

# SFHMH100

## Establish and maintain the therapeutic relationship

---

**Developed by** Skills for Health

---

**Version number** 1

---

**Date approved** June 2010

---

**Indicative review date** June 2012

---

**Validity** Current

---

**Status** Original

---

**Originating organisation** Skills for Health

---

**Original URN** MH100

---

**Relevant occupations** Health, Public Services and Care; Health and Social Care; Child Development and Well Being; Associate Professionals and Technical Occupations; Education and training; Preparation for life and work; Health and Social Services Officers; Health Associate Professionals; Therapists; Social Welfare Associate Professionals; Healthcare and Related Personal Services; Childcare and Related Personal Services

---

**Suite** Mental Health

---

**Key words** Establish, maintain, therapeutic, relationship

---