

## SFHPT49

Enable the client in humanistic therapy to become aware of unconscious aspects of their experience



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### Overview

This standard is for those therapists who maintain a humanistic stance, but attend to the role of unconscious communication in the therapeutic encounter. It is about the use of countertransference phenomena to develop and explore hypotheses about feelings and emotions that the client may be trying to express.

This standard describes therapeutic practice adopted successfully in mental health and wellbeing interventions for adults, based on the philosophical tenets of the humanistic tradition and incorporating a range of approaches from a humanistic value base (see reference in the additional information section on page 5). To apply this standard, therapists also need to take account of the multiple problems and complex co- morbidities that individual clients may bring to therapy.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that they are receiving supervision and that their practice reflects up to date information and policies. This standard should be understood in the context of the Digest of National Occupational Standards for Psychological Therapies.

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### Performance criteria

*You must be able to:*

- P1 clarify the client's self-reported recurring emotional and relational patterns and themes in their life, historically and currently
- P2 facilitate the client's understanding of the significance of heightened emotion in current and previous experiences
- P3 discern and distinguish the client's and your own emotional processes
- P4 listen to and empathically communicate understanding of the client's emerging processes
- P5 allow the client to represent their experiences using words from their frame of reference
- P6 allow the client to use silence or avoid silence and explore the meaning and significance of silence with them
- P7 when relevant to the client, address your own and the client's avoidance of particular issues, concerns, emotions or underlying feelings
- P8 empathically understand what is communicated indirectly, symbolically and metaphorically
- P9 explore your countertransference responses to the client and what these might mean in the relationship
- P10 draw on your own and the client's embodied experiencing
- P11 empathically explore hypotheses about feelings and emotions that the client may be trying to express
- P12 remain with the unknown when this aids the client's process
- P13 uncover and explore your own unrecognised emotional responses to the client through supervision

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#### Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

#### Relational processes in the immediate therapeutic relationship

- K1 the mechanism and nature of shared meanings co-constructed by therapist and client
- K2 how the therapeutic relationship reflects the relationship histories of both the client and the therapist
- K3 how the explicit and implicit meanings that shape the client's and therapist's perceptions of their world may be experienced within and influence the therapeutic relationship
- K4 how the client's explicit, manifest communications may contain an implicit, latent meaning
- K5 the ways in which aspects of past events can be re-experienced in the present
- K6 how the therapist may make use of their immediate emotional and embodied reactions to the client
- K7 the ways in which the therapist's immediate responses and experiences within the therapeutic relationship can form a basis for communicating empathic understanding and informing exploration of the client's subjectivity

#### Principles of humanistic therapy

*You need to know and understand:*

- K8 philosophy and principles that inform humanistic therapy
- K9 humanistic theories of therapeutic process
- K10 approaches to psychological therapy that have grown out of the humanistic psychology movement
- K11 experiential methods of learning
- K12 non-humanistic approaches that influence humanistic therapy

#### Conditions for therapeutic change

*You need to know and understand:*

- K13 the rationale for responding empathically to the clients and being warm, open, non-judgmental, genuine and transparent
- K14 how to employ the specific methodology, key concepts and relevant components of the model being used
- K15 how to maintain therapeutic conditions
- K16 the psychological conditions that make change more likely

#### Mental health and wellbeing

*You need to know and*

- K17 the range and severity of mental health difficulties and their presentation

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*understand:*

- K18 the factors associated with the emergence, development and maintenance of mental health difficulties
- K19 humanistic models of mental distress
- K20 the ways in which mental health difficulties can impact on personal and interpersonal functioning
- K21 models of a fully functioning individual

#### **Human growth and development and the origins of psychological difficulties**

*You need to know and understand:*

- K22 models of change, health and wellbeing
- K23 the impact of conflicts within the individual
- K24 the impact of social context on psychological growth and development
- K25 the role that emotional experiencing has in an individual's awareness of how an action contributes to growth
- K26 the role of relationship in the development of self-experience
- K27 the mechanisms and effects of unconscious processes in the development of self-experience
- K28 the role of unconscious processes in difficulties in self-experience
- K29 how thinking, feeling and behaviour are determined by an individual's subjective reality
- K30 the impact on psychological development of empathic attunement and acceptance and the extent of its absence during the formative years
- K31 the mechanism and effects of internalisation of the values, beliefs and attitudes of others
- K32 the development and benefits of the capacity to reflect on inner processes and experiences
- K33 the development of the capacity to balance inner and outer realities
- K34 the multiple perspectives from which human experience can be viewed

#### **The actualising tendency**

*You need to know and understand:*

- K35 the role of actualisation in human growth and health
- K36 the ways in which unconscious processes can undermine, distort or block the actualising tendency
- K37 how the actualising tendency is expressed in the practice of humanistic therapy
- K38 the concept of symptoms as a signal for integrating experience and growth
- K39 the concept of symptoms as indicators of the actualisation process

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### Additional Information

#### External links

This standard is derived from research reported in Roth A D, Hill A and Pilling S (2009) *The competences required to deliver effective Humanistic Psychological Therapies*. Centre for Outcomes Research & Effectiveness (CORE) University College London.

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

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Planned Review Date: 2014

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**Relevant occupations** Health, Public Services and Care; Health and Social Care; Health Professionals; Healthcare and Related Personal Services

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**Suite** Psychological Therapies

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