



bacp

British Association for
Counselling & Psychotherapy

A RESEARCH-BASED CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR
TELEPHONE AND E-COUNSELLING

Telephone and E-Counselling Training Curriculum

BACP Professional Standards

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Telephone and E-Counselling Training Curriculum

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Contents

Introduction	1
Rationale	1
Defining Telephone and E-Counselling	1
Course Entry Requirements	1
Course Delivery	1
References	1
Overall Aims of the Curriculum	2
Course Outline	2
Module 1: Introduction to Telephone and E-Counselling	3
Module 2: Psychological Processes relevant to Telephone and E-Counselling	5
Module 3: Assessment of Clients for Telephone and E-Counselling	6
Module 4: Contracting and Boundaries for Telephone and E-Counselling	7
Module 5: Communicating with Telephone and E-Counselling	8
Module 6: Text-Based Communication and Creativity in Telephone and E-Counselling	9
Module 7: Managing Risk when Telephone and E-Counselling	10
Module 8: Endings and Supervision when Telephone and E-Counselling	11
Suggested Course Summative Assessments to assess Learning Outcomes and Competence	12
Indicative Reading List and Resources	13
Reading List and Resources	13
Journals specialising in online/e-learning	15
Suggested Teaching Materials for the Telephone and E-Counselling Training Curriculum	15
Module Training Suggestions	16
Suggestions for Future CPD Training in Telephone and E-Counselling	19
Pre-course Questionnaire for Telephone and E-Counselling	19
Post-course Questionnaire for Telephone and E-Counselling	19

Introduction

Rationale

The BACP *Training Curriculum for Telephone and E-Counselling* provides a consistent minimum standard to which practitioners should be trained. The curriculum offers training providers a curriculum framework for a comprehensive course, detailing what is needed for telephone and e-counselling. It highlights best practice and has a module by module guide for the programme. The curriculum content has been drawn from the Telephone and E-Counselling research-based competences, the writing of which was overseen by an Expert Reference Group (ERG) and developed using the Roth & Pilling (2008) methodology. It is recommended that this curriculum be read in conjunction with these competences which can be found at <http://www.bacp.co.uk/research/competences/>-, and the Good Practice in Action Resources 040 and 047, found at <http://www.bacp.co.uk/ethics/newGPG.php> and the Ethical Framework for Good Practice which can be found at <http://www.bacp.co.uk/ethics/EFfCP>.

Course Entry Requirements

- Diploma level counselling/psychotherapy qualification, or equivalent
- BACP Member or equivalent member of a counselling professional body
- Own or access to computer/laptop/tablet with good broadband connection
- Own or access to landline or mobile phone

Course Delivery

The course is founded on the assumption that all participants have undergone full initial core training in counselling and/or psychotherapy before undertaking training in telephone and e-counselling. BACP specifically recommends that to work in this way practitioners need to ensure they are working within their competence. In addition, the following points are pertinent to the delivery of this course:

- The term *telephone and e-counselling* is used to encompass all counselling that takes place when the counsellor and client are not physically present with each other.
- Trainers will either be counsellors working with telephone and e-counselling themselves, or will have undertaken a specific training to deliver this curriculum (see *Training the Trainers in Telephone and E-Counselling*). They will be experienced and competent with this mode of delivery.

- It is important to have an awareness of the fast moving e-world and the ways in which technology quickly dates.
- It is important to be aware of competence when working with adults and/or children and young people using telephone and e-counselling. The student's core training and subsequent CPD training will have established competence in either adult or CYP counselling. Working beyond competence is to work unethically.
- While ethical, cross-cultural and diversity issues do have specific references within the modules, it is expected that they will also permeate the curriculum. It is essential that telephone and e-counsellors are aware of ethical aspects of telephone and e-working.
- Telephone and e-counselling training can be delivered through Higher Education (HE), Further Education (FE) and by private training providers and different training establishments have differing qualification, assessment and validation requirements that they have to fulfil.
- Training providers will also have to adapt the assessment criteria to meet the requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and the NQF National Qualifications Framework/Qualifications and Credit Framework levels.
- Throughout the course there should also be an emphasis on applying or adapting participants' own therapeutic approach to deliver telephone and e-counselling. There is no intention within the training to favour any theoretical perspective.
- The curriculum is indicative rather than prescriptive, recognising that trainers will need to adapt it to their setting and their students. It is designed to run across a minimum of eight modules.
- It is important that the modules are delivered in a time frame that allows for processing of knowledge and to allow the experience of practice to complement the learning. However, course timings can be adapted to suit the course provider. All modules must be successfully completed. The course assessment must also be successfully completed.
- In keeping with the philosophy of telephone and e-counselling, some of the course should to be delivered using telephone and e-delivery.
- Where appropriate with module content, each module should include supervised practice sessions.

Course Outline

- It is essential that participants pass the skills assessment to show competence working in this way prior to working with clients.
- At the end of the course, students are required to work with at least 3 clients prior to undertaking their final assessment.
- On successful completion of the whole course and the assessments, it is the counsellor's responsibility to maintain up to date technological knowledge and competence with telephone and e-counselling through appropriate CPD.

Overall Aims of the Curriculum

The aim of this curriculum is to enable counsellors and psychotherapists to become competent in the knowledge and practice of telephone and e-counselling, to be able to draw on this knowledge and practice, and to work in an effective and ethical way.

Module 1:

Introduction to Telephone and E-Counselling including the BACP Ethical Framework

Module 2:

Psychological Processes relevant to Telephone and E-Counselling

Module 3:

Assessment of Clients for Telephone and E-Counselling

Module 4:

Contracting and Boundaries for Telephone and E-Counselling

Module 5:

Communicating with Telephone and E-Counselling

Module 6:

Text-based Communication and Creativity in Telephone and E-Counselling

Module 7:

Managing Risk when Telephone and E-Counselling

Module 8:

Endings and Supervision in Telephone and/or E-Counselling



Module 1

Introduction to Telephone and E-Counselling

Aim of Module

The aim of this module is to offer an understanding of what is meant by telephone and e-counselling and to offer information on the structure of the modules and assessments within the programme. It also offers a revision of the BACP Ethical Framework and the ways in which this pertains to telephone and e-counselling.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand what telephone and e-counselling is.
- Reflect on what telephone and e-counselling means for you as a practitioner.
- Be aware of issues faced in telephone and e-counselling when working across international time-zones.
- Be fully versed with the ethical aspects of telephonic and e-working, including from an international perspective.

How the curriculum works

The course is founded on the assumption that all participants have undergone full initial core training in counselling or psychotherapy before undertaking training in telephone and e-counselling. BACP specifically recommends that to work in this way practitioners need to ensure they are working within their competence. In addition, the following points are pertinent to the delivery of this course:

- The term *telephone and e-counselling* is used to encompass all counselling that takes place when the counsellor and client are not physically present with each other.
- The course emphasises applying or adapting participants' own therapeutic approach to deliver telephone and e-counselling. There is no intention within the training to favour any theoretical perspective.

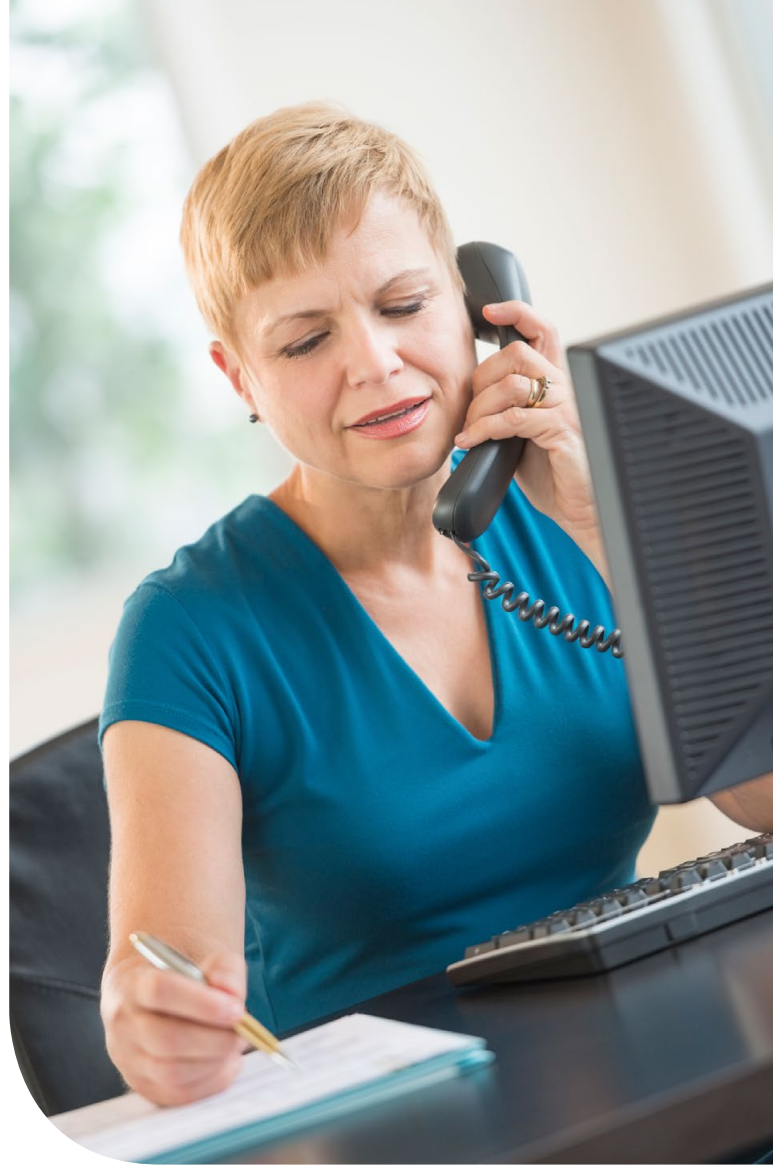
- All modules must be successfully completed in the time allocated. The course summative assessment must also be successfully completed. It is helpful for learning that all formative assessments are completed.
- In keeping with the philosophy of telephone and e-counselling, it would be helpful for at least part of the course to be delivered in this way.
- Each module will include practice and supervision sessions.
- The overall aim of the course is to enable counsellors and psychotherapists to be competent in the knowledge and practice of telephone and e-counselling, to be able to draw on this knowledge and practice and to provide effectively.

What is Telephone and E-Counselling?

- Traditionally, counselling has been conducted face-to-face, with immediacy both in terms of responsiveness and physical presence.
- In recent years different ways of engaging in counselling have emerged, partly predicated on the rapid development of communication technologies with which the general population is familiar and comfortable.
- This includes systems for written communication (such as email or online "chat"), along with systems for audio communication (using public telephone networks or internet-based telephony) or audio-visual communication (such as video conferencing).
- These provide the opportunity for synchronous communication (where each person's response is responded to immediately) or for asynchronous communication (for example, exchanges via e-mail, where there is a delay between sending a message and receiving a response).
- Some of these technologies operate through the internet, others do not.
- What unites all of them is that the counsellor and client are not physically present in the same space, and may not be present in the same moment.

What initial checks need to be made?

- Knowledge that telephone and e-counselling uses technology that may not be wholly confidential and checking whether audio/visual equipment is fit for purpose (see Good Practice in Action 040 Commonly Asked Questions about social media and the counselling professions and Good Practice in Action 047 Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions Supplementary Guidance: Working Online).
- The competence of the counsellor and client in the medium chosen for telephone and e-counselling.
- The reliability of the technology and connections with which the counsellor and client are working.
- The communication ability of the client in a digital environment.
- Social networks of the client and counsellor and 'rules' surrounding their use.
- Issues faced when working across international time-zones.
- Knowledge of legal issues in different countries with regard to online working. GPG 047 states "The law differs between countries. When working face to face the applicable law is determined by where the work takes place. When working using the telephone and/or online it is possible for the practitioner and client to be located in different legal systems and subject to different laws".



Ethical Aspects of Telephone and E-Working

- Ethical working, in particular, but not restricted to, the BACP Ethical Framework.

Suggested Formative Assessment

Discuss as a group what the main learning points of this module have been for you. Write a short reflective piece on what telephone and e-counselling means for you following this first introductory session.

Module 2

Psychological Processes relevant to Telephone and E-Counselling

Aim of Module

This module aims to highlight differences between ways in which people might behave when communicating on the telephone and/or e-communicating as opposed to when they interact in face-to-face situations, and the important implications these different behaviours have for the therapeutic process.

Learning Outcomes

- Critically understand the ways in which the technological environment can encourage disinhibition for both client and counsellor and ways in which this will have a significant impact on the therapeutic process.
- Be able to draw on knowledge of ways in which disinhibited clients can be helped to pace their communications in a way that is conducive to their ability to process material.
- Be able to draw on an awareness that client and counsellor may need to be reminded of the technological environment to avoid inappropriate and inaccurate fantasies and/or assumptions of each other.
- A thorough practical understanding of writing as the medium for therapy.
- A practical ability to manage attachment and rejection in the context of telephone and e-counselling.
- Knowledge of the culture of internet communities.

Content

Managing the impact of disinhibition

- Knowledge of issues that can encourage disinhibition when counselling on the telephone and/or e-working, such as the sense of being anonymous; being invisible and thereby not experiencing others' reactions to what is said; an absence of external authority and not experiencing others as 'real'.
- Disinhibition and the effect this may have on the therapeutic relationship, such as rapid disclosure of information that risks leaving the client feeling overwhelmed.



Writing as a therapeutic medium

- Knowledge that the written word: can be therapeutic itself by means of self-expression and reflection; can acquire a sense of permanence; can appear more authoritative than the spoken word; its meaning cannot often be moderated by contextual factors; needs to be expressed with care; can be used to detect and comment on clients shifts in style that may indicate psychological changes; can be used to enable clients to remain in control of their feelings.

Managing attachment and rejection

- Knowledge that telephone and e-counselling can promote feelings where fantasy and speculation about the practitioner (and client) are to the fore, and as such, knowledge of managing such phenomena are key, such as managing transference and countertransference by agreeing clear boundaries, by checking perceptions and understanding, and by discussing the therapeutic relationship. When telephone/e-counselling, be able to manage issues such as absence of a prompt response from the counsellor evoking feelings of rejection or abandonment in the client; perceptions that the practitioner be constantly and immediately available to them.

Internet culture

- Knowledge of the characteristics of internet communication, such as transient relationships, false identities, playing out fantasies, and the implications these have for the therapeutic relationship.

Suggested Formative Assessment

Write down five key learning points from this module.

Module 3

Assessment of Clients for Telephone and E-Counselling

Aim of Module

The aim of this module is to enable the counsellor to provide a thorough assessment of clients for their suitability to undertake telephone and/or e-counselling and to be able to assess clients for suitability to work with different media.

Learning Outcomes

- Assess clients' competence in use of technology when undertaking telephone and/or e-counselling.
- Assess clients' attitude and suitability for telephone and/or e-counselling.
- Discuss advantages and disadvantages of telephone and/or e-counselling with clients.
- Assess psychological and physical client difficulties that may affect effective use of telephone and/or e-counselling and be able to recommend appropriate software support.
- Evaluate clients' ability to communicate when undertaking telephone and/or e-counselling.
- Assess clients' suitability for text-based counselling.

Content

Relevant knowledge required for assessment

- Assess clients' preferences and competences regarding the type of technology to be used. Assess clients' ability to communicate using different technologies. Assess clients' attitude towards, and ability to engage in, the process using technology. Assess clients' ability to express emotion using technology. Assess clients' presenting issues, both physical and psychological, using CORE or other online assessment tools.

Advantages and disadvantages of telephone and/or e-counselling

- Discuss accessibility of technology to individual clients and the ways in which accessibility to telephone and/or technology enhances or disrupts the process of therapeutic practice. Within this discussion, issues such as flexibility of sessions, therapy via technology being less inhibiting than face-to-face counselling, the possibility of technological disruptions, data security, the lack of non-verbal communication and the lack of spontaneity, need assessment.

Suitability for telephone and/or e-counselling

- Assess levels of care and support required and levels of risk, levels of client functioning ability and whether or not there is poor reality testing.
- Being able to work with transference reactions through technology, challenge to boundaries and speed of communication. Assess clients' ability to express themselves and any previous experience of therapy.
- Assess physical and/or medical factors affecting telephone and/or e-counselling and have knowledge of appropriate software for those with a disability.
- Assess difficulties in accessing the telephone and/or internet in a secure and private place, including technological limitations.
- Understand clients' use of social media and existing online relationships and/or online groups.

Text-based counselling

- Assess own and clients' ability to use text based counselling and to express themselves through this medium. Understand timings of responses and tolerance of the same. Recognise alternative sources of support if necessary.

Suggested Formative Assessment

Write a short reflective piece on aspects of this module that appear most pertinent.

Module 4

Contracting and Boundaries for Telephone and E-Counselling

Aim of Module

The aim of this module is to enable counsellors to agree a robust contract with clients that is in keeping with the counsellor's own therapeutic approach, ensuring safety and ethical working.

Learning Outcomes

- Be able to agree a contract with clients when embarking on telephone and/or e-counselling.
- Understand ways in which to establish client identity and establish suitable boundaries around own identity.

Content

Ground rules and boundaries with the client

- Create an environment in which the counsellor is able to discuss the following: timings and limits of availability; duration of sessions; number of messages sent and responded to; routine of message responses; routine timings of responses; understanding no social website contact; agreeing alternative procedures for contact in the event of IT failure or mobile phone signal failure.

Data protection and confidentiality issues

- Discussing the importance of maintaining confidentiality and data security with clients using their own equipment and knowledge of ways this can be achieved. Negotiating ways in which records of written exchanges are kept confidential including discussing ways in which clients' data will be protected. Discussing limits to, and breaches of, confidentiality. Keeping a formal record of consent given by clients to the terms and conditions of therapeutic practice.

Establishing the identity of the client

- Knowledge that absence of visual contact presents problems in verifying the identity of the client, and within this develop an ability to identify signs that a client may be older or younger than they purport to be by noting age congruence of language used and contextual information offered by the client. Be aware of legal and ethical differences when working with children rather than adults and be able to take reasonable steps to verify age the client's age accordingly. Develop an ability to elicit and triangulate lines of information about a client to substantiate their background and identity.

Supplementary telephone and/or e-therapeutic resources

- Identify when a client might benefit from using additional online resources and/or they ask for additional support to supplement telephone and/or e-counselling, such as further information relating to their difficulties or others' experiences of similar issues. Create and draw on knowledge of appropriate online resources for a range of mental health and emotional difficulties and have the ability to evaluate the integrity, security and effectiveness of such resources and those sites that may be harmful for the client. Develop an ability to discuss the usefulness of online resources used by the client to support the therapeutic progress.

Complaints procedure

- Be able to inform clients of complaints procedures available to them; ways in which complaints will be addressed between client and counsellor; how to make a complaint to the counsellor's employer; how to make a complaint to the counsellor's professional body.

Suggested Formative Assessment

Write down the key learning points from this module, making sure you can meet the learning outcomes for this module.

Module 5

Communicating with Telephone and E-Counselling

Aim of Module

The aim of this module is for counsellors to understand that telephone and e-counselling may carry a greater risk of misunderstanding than face-to-face communication and that they will need to use this understanding to check that meaning is being interpreted accurately by both parties.

Learning Outcomes

- To have a thorough knowledge of communicating using written text and be able to draw on this knowledge in practice.
- To have an in-depth ability to communicate using audio-visual technology.

Content

Communicating using written text

- An ability to adapt style of communication to the needs of different clients yet keep a consistent writing style with each individual client; write in a manner that is professional but with an ability to engage the client, understanding that communications containing errors may undermine the client's confidence in the counsellor.
- Knowledge of netiquette and use of emoticons and other symbols such as bold typeface, italics or capitals as a means of emphasis and expression of emotion, and mutuality of understanding of abbreviations and acronyms.
- Knowledge and understanding of specific styles of written text used by particular groups, such as teenagers.
- An ability to suggest, initiate and respond to therapeutic writing tasks such as the writing of unsent letters.

Communicating via telephone, internet based telephony, video conferencing

- An ability to establish that the client can create a safe and secure context in which the counselling can take place and to agree clear boundaries such as agreeing dates and times of calls, who will be responsible for initiating calls and ensuring environments without distractions.
- Knowledge of potential threats to security when using mobile phones and communicating these to clients.
- Be aware of tone of voice when opening sessions to convey acceptance and empathy. Being able to use reflective skills well to illustrate that the client is being listened to. This will also include checking for accuracy in both pace, emotional state and use of silence.

Suggested Formative Assessment

Engage in a video-conference group discussion drawing on the knowledge and skills learnt in this module.

Module 6

Text-Based Communication and Creativity in Telephone and E-Counselling

Aim of Module

The aim of this module is for counsellors to draw on their understanding that text-based counselling is different from face-to-face communication.

Learning Outcomes

- To have a thorough understanding of the impact of the use of asynchronous and synchronous text-based communication.
- To be able to use creativity when telephone and/or e-counselling

Content

Using asynchronous text-based communication, such as e-mail, message boards

- Understand the strengths of asynchronous communication, such as time to respond to messages received and flexibility of time for contact, and its limitations, such as lack of spontaneity in therapeutic contact and delays between messages leading to a lack of therapeutic continuity.
- An ability to compose clear and therapeutic messages beginning with a warm greeting, ensuring an explicit therapeutic focus and, where appropriate, the practitioner's own emotional response to the material, and ending with an open question that invites a thoughtful and reflective response.
- When composing a challenging response to a client, be able to write in such a way as to help the client to accept the challenge and remain engaged.
- For confidentiality reasons, understand the importance for counsellor and client to acknowledge receipt of messages.
- Reflect on delays between receipt of messages to check whether the client found a message painful, is struggling to engage, or whether there is no significance to a delay.

Using synchronous text-based communication

- Knowledge that synchronous communication requires spontaneous and instant responses and a need therefore to write fluently and concisely, infer the client's emotional state within the response and reflect on significance of silence and pauses.
- Listen to recordings and/or live demonstrations of synchronous sessions by practitioner experts.

Using Creativity

- Reflection on counsellor's own creative abilities and ways in which these might be used to develop the therapeutic relationship with the client.
- Advantages, disadvantages and ethics of the use of metaphors, photographs, images, drawings, collages, role play visualisations, story making, journaling, unsent letters, co-creations on a whiteboard, introduction to second life, introduction to avatars, etc. and when to introduce these into telephone and e-counselling. Note that further CPD training on avatars and second life may be required to feel fully competent in these areas.

Suggested Formative Assessment

Engage in a text-based group discussion reflecting on how asynchronous and synchronous text-based communication works in practice, introducing some creative methods to experience ways in which creativity might be used with clients.

Module 7

Managing Risk when Telephone and E-Counselling

Aim of Module

The aim of this module is to be able to draw on awareness of the risks to client and counsellor when telephone and e-counselling, and ways of reducing and managing them.

Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge of risk indicators when visual cues are not present.
- Make effective use of risk assessment measures for telephone and e-counselling and be able to continually assess risk throughout.
- Have a thorough knowledge of, and be able to articulate, ways of working with suicidal clients.
- Manage work with clients at risk, including additional support.
- Develop internal and external strategies for managing impact of risk on self.

Content

Identify and manage risk when telephone and e-counselling

- In the absence of non-verbal cues, draw on 'unseen' knowledge that signals increasing distress and/or vulnerability and understand the differing challenges from face-to-face work, including the difficulties inherent to be able to judge the level and severity of risk and levels of client support through familial and social relationships.
- Awareness of not dismissing risk of clients who appear less inhibited than others. Know procedures for dealing with risk and communicate these to clients, with an awareness of limitations of intervention when dealing with risk in telephone and e-counselling.
- Knowledge of information required to enable support if crisis emerges, such as details of GP, friends, family, client's postal address and telephone number.



- Ability to monitor client communications to identify risk issues, either directly or indirectly such as when a client reports engaging in risky behaviour, becomes suicidal, increased levels of hopelessness and despair, when a client describes a third party being at risk, recognising uncharacteristic online behaviour, assessment measures such as CORE, PHQ-9 indicating elevated levels of risk.
- Ability to manage risk, such as directing clients to sources of emergency and other resources, including face-to-face, telephone counselling and listening resources on counsellor's website; offering additional contact between sessions; keeping contact with suicidal clients until appropriate support arrives; identify when risk warrants breaking confidentiality.

Managing the counsellor's anxiety in relation to risk

- Recognising, addressing and managing the emotional impact of 'holding' risk issues in telephone and e-counselling through supervision and peer support.

Suggested Formative Assessment

Engage in role play with another counsellor on the course where one is counsellor and one is client, then swap around. The session 'played' should be in the middle stage of counselling, when the client is struggling with their issues. Demonstrate an ability to recognise and manage risk.

Module 8

Endings and Supervision when Telephone and/or E-Counselling

Aim of Module

The aim of this module is twofold. Firstly, it aims to enable the counsellor to end the counselling relationship with their client when telephone and/or e-counselling and, secondly, to make appropriate use of counselling with the understanding that telephone and/or e-counselling requires supervision for the counsellor to be conducted by a supervisor who has knowledge and experience of working with the same approach.

Learning Outcomes

- Manage ending a relationship with clients when telephone and/or e-counselling.
- To be able to evaluate risk when ending telephone and/or e-counselling and have knowledge of further resources of support to offer clients.
- To have knowledge of asynchronous endings and the implications of this for therapeutic practice.
- To be able to agree the supervision contract for telephone and/or e-counselling, to include being able to identify the optimal way for the supervisor to access clinical material.
- Have an ability to reflect on the impact of telephone and/or e-counselling on the client and the counsellor.

Content

To understand potential pitfalls when ending a telephone and/or e-counselling relationship

- Knowledge that a strong sense of intimacy developed by the accessibility and immediacy of technology means some clients may find it difficult to end the relationship, and may log on as a new client. An ability to end sessions, especially with clients who find it difficult to disengage. Be able to evaluate risk issues where clients present reasons for maintaining therapeutic contact, and take appropriate action. Knowledge of how to verify when a new client is in fact a returning client and whether a new contract is appropriate.

To have knowledge of asynchronous endings and what this means

- Awareness that practitioner and client will experience the ending at different times in asynchronous communication and therefore the need to discuss the ending in advance. Draw on the knowledge that it is good practice for the

therapist to send the final message and obtain a 'read receipt' for it.

To have knowledge of further resources of support to offer clients

- Knowledge of further sources of support that can be accessed by the client after the conclusion of therapy, if appropriate.

An ability to agree the supervisory contract

- An ability to agree the supervisory contract to include whether or not the contact between practitioner and supervisor parallels the practitioner and client mode of communication, such as being online, using the phone, text-based, synchronous or asynchronous communication; frequency and quantity of text-based supervisory contact; agreeing a procedure for re-establishing contact in case of technical failure; procedure for making contact in an emergency; procedure for data security; supervisory hours congruent with counsellor's professional body.

An ability to identify the optimal way for the supervisor to access clinical material

- Supervisor access to clinical material such as access to transcripts of therapeutic material, live observation of sessions.

An ability to reflect on the impact on the client and the counsellor when telephone and/or e-counselling

- Knowledge of ways in which telephone and e-counselling might impact the counsellor and their client.

Suggested Formative Assessment

In pairs, discuss the main reflections on ending telephone and e-counselling and the way the process of telephone and e-counselling has impacted.

Suggested Course Summative Assessments to assess Learning Outcomes and Competence

Aim of Assessments

The aim of these assessments is for the counsellor to show competence in their knowledge and practice of telephone and e-counselling. They are compulsory for all students and should be undertaken at the end of the course.

When students successfully pass the telephone and e-skills assessment, they are then eligible to carry out telephone and e-counselling with clients, work with at least 3 clients under suitable supervision, obtain client consent to use material for assessment purposes, and then complete assessment 2.

1. 50 minute telephone and/or e-skills assessment with peers to assess therapeutic and technological competence in working with clients, to include contracting, assessment and endings and write a 1000 word reflective statement of the process. Show competence in the following areas:

- An ability to assess clients' competence in the use of technology.
 - An ability to assess clients' attitude and suitability for telephone and e-counselling.
 - Knowledge of advantages and disadvantages of telephone and e-counselling with clients.
 - An ability to assess psychological and physical client difficulties that may affect effective use of telephone and e-counselling and be able to recommend appropriate software support.
 - An ability to assess clients' capability to communicate when having telephone and e-counselling.
 - An ability to assess clients' suitability for text-based counselling.
 - Knowledge of risk indicators when visual cues are not present.
 - An understanding of how to make effective use of risk assessment measures for telephone and e-counselling and demonstrate a critical understanding of the ability to continually assess risk throughout.
 - A thorough knowledge of, and ability to articulate, ways of working with suicidal clients.
 - Managing the work with clients at risk, including additional support.
 - An ability to compose clear and therapeutic messages beginning with a warm greeting, ensuring an explicit therapeutic focus and where appropriate, the counsellor's own emotional response to the material, and ending with an open question that invites a thoughtful and reflective response.
 - Relationship with clients when telephone and e-counselling.
- Risk when ending telephone and e-counselling and knowledge of further resources of support to offer clients.
 - Knowledge of asynchronous endings and what this means.
 - The impact of telephone and e-counselling on the client and the counsellor.
- #### 2. Write a case study of no less than 2500 words on one of your clients demonstrating an ability to carry out an initial assessment, taking into account any risks apparent. Show an awareness of psychological processes and appropriate communication in telephone and e-counselling. Throughout, show a critical understanding of the following:
- Working to the BACP Ethical Framework.
 - How you would develop internal and external strategies for managing impact of risk on self.
 - The ways in which the technological environment can encourage disinhibition for both client and counsellor and ways in which this will have a significant impact on the therapeutic process.
 - The ways in which disinhibited clients can be helped to pace their communications in a way that is conducive to their ability to process material.
 - An awareness that client and counsellor may need to be reminded of the technological environment to avoid inappropriate and inaccurate fantasies and/or assumptions of each other.
 - An understanding of writing as the medium for therapy.
 - An ability to manage attachment and rejection in the context of telephone and e-counselling
 - Knowledge of the culture of internet communities.
 - An understanding of the strengths of asynchronous communication, such as time to respond to messages received and flexibility of time for contact, and its limitations, such as lack of spontaneity in therapeutic contact and delays between messages leading to a lack of therapeutic continuity.
 - An ability to compose clear and therapeutic messages beginning with a warm greeting, ensuring an explicit therapeutic focus and, where appropriate, the counsellor's own emotional response to the material, and ending with an open question that invites a thoughtful and reflective response.
 - When composing a challenging response to a client, show an ability to write in such a way as to help the client to accept the challenge and remain engaged.
 - Show an understanding of the importance for counsellor and client to acknowledge receipt of messages.
 - Reflect on delays between receipt of messages to check whether the client found a message painful, is struggling to engage, or whether there is no significance to a delay.

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Journals specialising in online/e-learning

Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning

Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks

The Journal of Interactive Online Learning

European Journal of Open and Distance and e-Learning

The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning

Journal of Educators Online

Therapeutic Innovations in Light of Technology – quarterly journal published by the Online Therapy Institute: <http://onlinetherapyinstitute.com>

Suggested Teaching Materials for the Telephone and E-Counselling Training Curriculum

Course Delivery

Most of the usual methods of delivering a course can be included when e-working. These include:

- working in pairs and small groups
- PowerPoint presentations
- Whole group discussions
- Trainer demonstrations (these could be using live text and/or video sessions, discussion of email exchanges, or recorded voice sessions)
- Hand-outs and pre-session reading matter
- Journaling
- Using a web-based campus to initiate and respond to text based trainer and fellow participants' discussion topics

While it is suggested that each session includes practice sessions and supervision sessions, trainers' preferences will reflect the ways in which these are arranged and focussed.

Training Suggestions for Module 1: Introduction to Telephone and E-Counselling

- Start with input on an overview of the course and this module
- A short history of telephone and e-counselling from the Freud/Jung letters onwards may be useful in setting the scene
- Explore the BACP Ethical Framework and ways in which this particularly pertains to telephone and e-counselling and working across national boundaries
- Explore how to define 'telephone and e-counselling'
- Short PowerPoint on definition and development of telephone and e-counselling
- Discuss attitudes to telephone and e-counselling and the relevance to client attitudes
- Group work and plenary on who might choose to work in this way and their reasons
- Discussion and input on safety and security of telephonic and e-communications
- Case studies – composing possible responses to initial enquiries from clients wishing to work on the telephone and/or electronically (telephone and text based enquiries)
- Establishing small practice groups that will help the participants to develop skills in telephone and e-counselling with clients
- Exercise on specific diversity issues in relation to telephone and e-counselling
- Small group discussions about legal, data protection, security and technological issues
- Establishing course supervision groups
- Exploration of the need to conduct telephone and e-counselling with clients during the course
- Discussion of the need to set up a contract with an e-supervisor for the course

Training Suggestions for Module 2: Psychological Processes relevant to Telephone and E-Counselling

- Thought storm issues of disinhibition when telephone and e-counselling and how this might affect the therapeutic relationship
- Share experiences and practice of ways in which the written word can be therapeutic by itself by means of expression and reflection
- Role-play working with disinhibition
- Small group discussions on individual differences and culture when telephone and e-counselling

- PowerPoint presentation on writing as a therapeutic medium
- Role-play using writing as a therapeutic medium
- Establishing small practice groups that will help the participants to develop their skills in managing attachment and rejection
- Discussion of internet culture

Training Suggestions for Module 3: Assessment of Clients for Telephone and E-Counselling

- Discussion about factors relevant to assessing suitability of clients
- Specifics of assessment related to different modes of delivery of telephone and e-counselling e.g. telephone, email, video
- Role-play pre-contract discussions and exchanges with regard to the client's understanding and attitude towards telephone and e-counselling
- Small group work on client presentations where counsellors might choose not to do telephone or e-counselling
- Collate ideas for making informed assessments
- Input on making decisions that a client is not suitable for telephone or e-counselling, and how to manage these
- Consideration of examples of assessment through written documents (e.g. emails and attachments)
- Trainer demonstration of assessing by text or voice communication
- Strategies for managing own reactions to choosing not to carry out telephone or e-counselling with a particular client
- Thought storm the advantages and disadvantages of telephone and e-counselling
- Practice sessions in small groups – assessing client suitability voice, live text and emails
- Supervision groups related to this the module

Training Suggestions for Module 4: Contracting and Boundaries for Telephone and E-Counselling

- Input on discussing with/educating clients around working safely and confidentially in telephone and e-counselling – client self-protection of appliances and data
- Thought storm differences between contracting face-to-face, on the phone and electronically
- Small groups considering examples of telephone and e-contracts and full plenary discussion session

- Work in pairs to begin to write their own contracts
- Input and group work on balancing the time taken to contract with the need to commence therapy
- Analysis of the language used in contracts and its possible impact on clients
- Small group input on when and how confidentiality might need to be broken when telephone and e-counselling
- Working with case studies to look for 'clues' as to any contradictions with regard to client's identity, suicidal ideation, addiction etc.
- Trainer demonstration of working without non-verbal clues
- Discussion of safeguarding self if using social media. In particular, consideration of how the counsellor ensures that clients can access all appropriate professional information before entering into a contract with the counsellor, but not other personal and social information
- Case studies on 'boundary pushing'
- Case studies e.g. stalking of a counsellor by an ex-client through social media; a client posting part of exchanges with counsellor on Facebook
- Input on ethical and legal challenges of working globally
- Practice sessions in small groups – sending and receiving contracts
- Supervision groups related to this the module

Training Suggestions for Module 5: Communicating with Telephone and E-Counselling

- Discussion of progress in accessing clients
- Thought storm on hopes and fears at the beginning of the work with clients
- Trainer demonstrations of first sessions by a variety of distance communications (phone/email/video etc)
- PowerPoint on strengths and limitations of different methods of telephone and e-counselling
- Small group practice of stages of the relationship using a variety of e-communications
- Input on internet communities and their possible effect and affect, both positive and negative, on the therapeutic relationship
- Sharing of outcome measurement instruments which may be adapted for telephone and e-counselling
- Thought storming ideas for working with 'stuckness' with telephone and e-counselling

- Input on managing sudden termination during telephone and e-counselling
- Group work on advantages and disadvantages of 'mixing' delivery methods e.g. video and email, email and f2f, telephone and video, telephone and email
- Small group practice sessions which review the therapeutic work; which work with boundary pushing; and which explore working across medium.
- Supervision groups related to this the module and to progress of clients

Training Suggestions for Module 6: Text-based Communication and Creativity in Telephone and E-Counselling

- Group discussions of examples of both client and counsellor text and/or recorded messages (produced for this exercise) to bring into awareness that there may be different meanings/interpretations of what has been said/written
- Practice sessions on tentative responses/checking out meanings when telephone and/or e-working
- Input on use of emoticons, 'text' language, bracketed indications of responses, acronyms etc.
- Input on what is meant by creativity and its potential value in working with clients
- Thought storming creative techniques which might draw on clients' and counsellors' creative selves
- Discussion on how to introduce creativity into telephone and/or e-counselling
- Paired work using a variety of creative practices e.g. metaphors, use of photos, images/drawing/collages which clients scan and send to counsellors, role-play, visualisations, story making, journaling, unsent letters, co-creations on a whiteboard etc.
- Group evaluation of ease of use, advantages and disadvantages of above
- Thought storm whether some techniques are more easily used in a particular medium (phone/text-based therapy/video)
- Group meeting in e.g. Second Life to discover its potential use as tool for e-counselling
- Group exploration of the ethical and unethical therapeutic use of e.g. Second Life, similar platforms, avatars etc.
- Practice sessions on introducing and working with a client creatively
- Supervision groups related to this the module and to progress of clients

Training Suggestions for Module 7: Managing Risk when Telephone and E-Counselling

- PowerPoint on working with risk issues which emerge during telephone and/or e-counselling
- Paired work on fears concerning managing risk in telephone and/or e-counselling
- Input on contracting around risk and possible changes to original contract
- Discussion of the appropriateness of changing contract
- Small group discussions about working with suicidal clients when telephone and/or e-counselling, including reflections on the implications and practicalities of keeping contact with a client who is actively suicidal until appropriate support arrives
- Thought storming indicators of risk when no nonverbal clues are present
- Weighing up the risk – immediate or a part of therapeutic process
- Managing the indications of risk within disinhibition
- Group presentations on aspects of risk management e.g. evaluating when/if to break confidentiality; issue of becoming hyper-aware of risk when telephone and/or e-counselling; appropriate responses to reported risky behaviours; responding to client's reports of risk to them from others; risk and specific groups e.g. young people
- Input from an organisation offering telephone and/or e-counselling concerning the management of risk from their client group
- Short discussion on signposting clients to other sources of support, list of pointers to good practice in signposting, such as websites, programs, groups, and the accuracy/beneficial nature of resources, and evaluating potentially harmful ones (e.g. pro-self-harm groups)
- Discussions about ethical practice including referrals/signposting and around dual support possibilities
- Thought storm on reasons for signposting - e.g. therapist competence, specific issues or need for extra support
- Practice groups on working with clients requiring signposting or referrals
- Supervision groups – exploring the ethical and practical issues of client risk in telephone and/or e-counselling and signposting and referral of clients

Training Suggestions for Module 8: Endings and Supervision in Telephone and/or E-Counselling

- Small group discussions about the impact on the therapist and client of endings in telephone and/or e-counselling
- Exploration of managing endings in a time limited contract
- Case studies on endings
- Small group work on aspects of endings e.g. post therapy online 'stalking'; return of ex-clients masking their identity as 'new' clients; creative ways of ending telephone and/or e-counselling; who should send the last message
- Client evaluation of telephone and/or e-counselling
- Group work on advantages and disadvantages of the delivery of supervision paralleling the delivery of counselling
- Exercise on 'My wants and needs from a suitable supervisor'
- Doing supervision contracts for telephone and e-counselling
- Case studies on telephone and e-supervision
- Thought storming 'finding a suitable supervisor'
- Ethical issues regarding supervisors accessing client material
- Discussion on whether there is a need for ongoing CPD concerning telephone and e-counselling and where to find it (e.g. OTI, OCTIA, OLT)
- Group reflections on the ease or difficulty of putting external supervision arrangements in place
- Input from a supervisor on how supervision might be used when working with risk and signposting
- Supervision groups – reviewing current arrangements with external supervisor, and consideration of how to choose a supplementary supervisor if necessary
- Ending supervision groups

Suggestions for Future CPD Training in Telephone and E-Counselling

- Second Life and Avatars
- Cyberbullying
- Munchausen's by Internet
- Addictions to readily available pornography
- Addictions to online gambling
- Online romances, sexual activity, affairs, etc.
- Social networking, including practitioners own responsible online presence and digital footprint
- Ethical marketing tools for telephone and e-counselling
- Setting up telephone and e-counselling services
- Telephone and e-counselling for a public service mental health forum



Pre-course Questionnaire for Telephone and E-Counselling

Part One

1. What are your reasons for taking the course?
2. What are your specific learning goals?
3. How will you know if you have achieved them? What will be different?
4. What do you need to do to help you achieve them?

Part Two

1. Have you made arrangements to be able to work with external clients during the course?
2. Have you told your supervisor that you are following this course?
3. Will your supervisor be able to supervise your practice for this therapeutic work?
4. If s/he is not able to supervise your practice, have you thought about how you might obtain external e-supervision during the course? (e.g. look at the website of the Association of Counsellors and Therapists Online – ACTO)

Post-course Questionnaire for Telephone and E-Counselling

Part One

1. Did your pre-course learning goals change during the course?
2. To what extent have you achieved your learning goals?
3. How did the course help you achieve them?
4. What else might the course have included which would have added to your achievement?

Part Two

5. Do you think the course covered its aims?
6. Which parts of the course did you find most useful? (Give reasons)
7. Which parts of the course did you find least useful? (Give reasons)
8. How satisfactory were the training methods used/ exercises etc?
9. If you could make one change to the course what would it be?
10. Please add any further comments about the day and/or give feedback to me.
11. Overall satisfaction with the course (Please circle one number)

Not satisfied at all Very Satisfied

1 2 3 4 5 6

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