

Ability to offer a therapeutic relationship that facilitates experiential exploration within a relational context

Core competences for work with young people

Knowledge of development in young people and of family development and transitions

Knowledge and understanding of mental health problems in young people and adults

Professional/legal issues

Knowledge of legal frameworks relating to working with young people

Knowledge of, and ability to operate within, professional and ethical guidelines

Knowledge of, and ability to work with, issues of confidentiality, consent and capacity

Ability to work within and across agencies

Ability to recognise and respond to concerns about child protection

Ability to work in a 'culturally competent' manner

Engagement & communication

Ability to engage and work with young people, parents and carers

Ability to communicate with young people of differing ages, developmental level and background

Knowledge of psychopharmacology in work with young people

Generic therapeutic competences

Knowledge of models of intervention, and their employment in practice

Ability to foster and maintain a good therapeutic alliance, and to grasp the client's perspective and 'world view'

Ability to work with the emotional content of the session

Ability to manage endings and service transitions

Ability to work with groups of young people and/or parents/carers

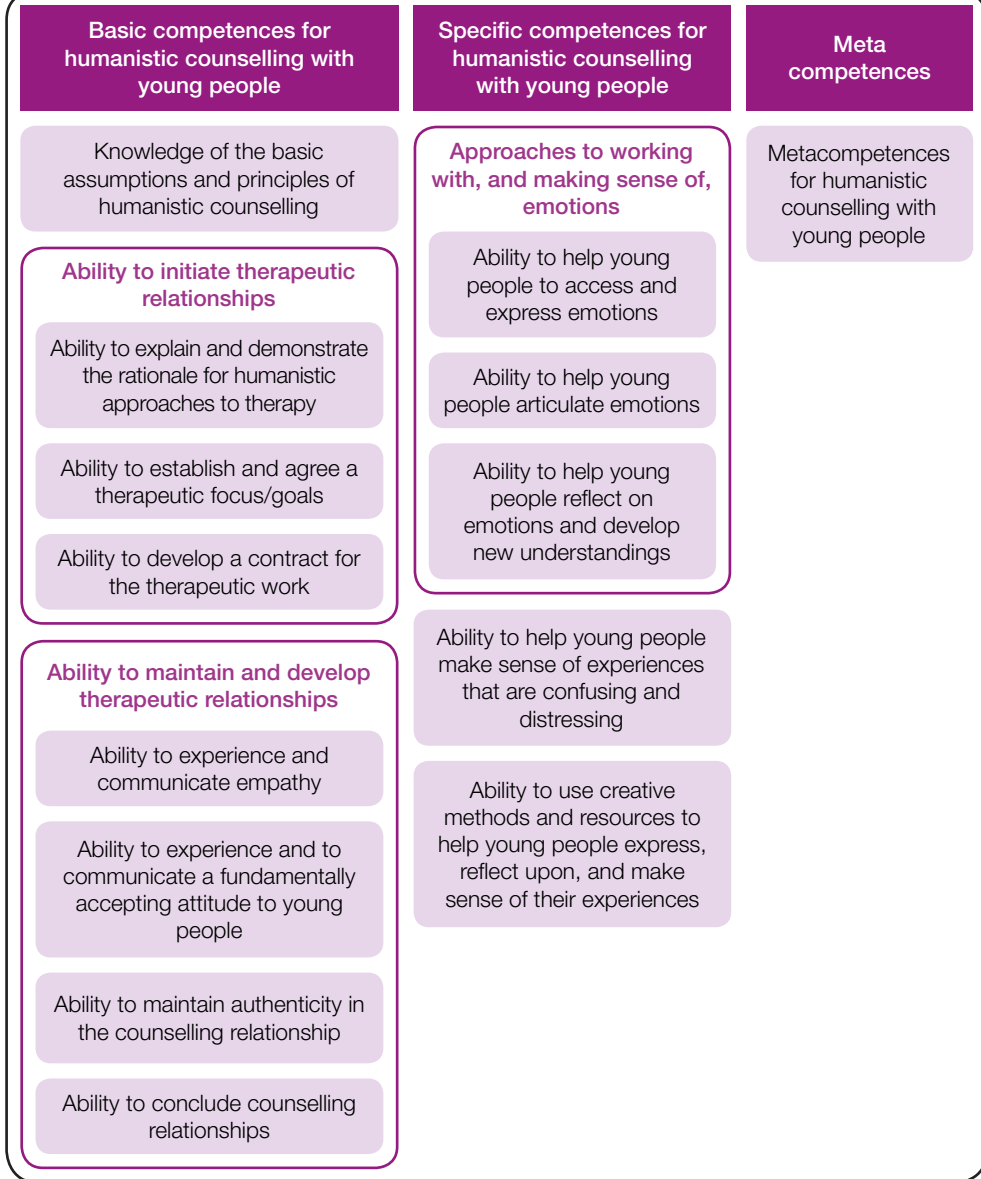
Ability to make use of measures (including monitoring of outcomes)

Ability to make use of supervision

Assessment competences

Ability to conduct a collaborative assessment

Ability to conduct a risk assessment



Working in an organisational context

Ability to work within a school context

Ability to promote emotional health in schools

Ability to work within a voluntary and community ('third') sector context

Ability to use additional therapeutic interventions

Ability to use self-help materials for a range of problems

Ability to use applied relaxation

Competences for work with young people (11–18 years)

Knowledge of development in young people and of family development and transitions

Knowledge of child and adolescent development

An ability to draw on knowledge of the needs of young people in relation to their physical, social, cognitive, emotional and psychosexual development (e.g., need for attachment relationships, education, appropriate patterns of diet, sleep and exercise)	
An ability to draw on knowledge of normal child and adolescent development and its impact on behaviour	
an ability to draw on knowledge of theories of child and adolescent development including:	
	physical development (including brain development in the first years of life (and the interaction of this development with affective experiences and deprivation); sensory and psychomotor development)
	cognitive development (intelligence, language and symbolisation, the Piagetian model, mentalisation, awareness of self and others)
	social and emotional development (emotional intelligence, interpersonal competence, identity and moral development at adolescence, compassion and self-management, the impact of the social context)
an ability to draw on knowledge of age-appropriate and problematic behaviours	
an ability to draw on concepts of developmental stages, including physical, affective and interpersonal, cognitive, language, social and psychosexual milestones	
an ability to draw on knowledge of the effects of developmental transitions e.g., onset of puberty	
an ability to draw on knowledge of the interaction between different aspects of a young person's development and between individual and contextual factors such as people and circumstances	

Knowledge of the care environment and its interaction with child and adolescent development

Attachment

An ability to draw on knowledge of attachment theory and its implications for:	
	child and adolescent development, via the concept of internal working models and the links between attachment status (i.e., secure vs. insecure), cognitive, emotional and social development
	the development of parent/carer-child, sibling and peer relationships
	the development of emotional wellbeing, self-regulation, mental health and mental health problems
	the development of resilience (i.e., the ability to cope with stressful and adverse experiences, including difficult interpersonal experiences)
	children and young people who are adopted or looked after

Influence of parent/carer

An ability to draw on knowledge of the impact of the pre-natal and peri-natal environment on child and adolescent development
An ability to draw on knowledge of parenting styles
An ability to draw on knowledge that the parent/carer's communication, interaction and stimulation of their child interacts with the child's development, attainment and developing mental health
An ability to draw on knowledge that effective forms of parent/carer-engagement change as children and young people develop
An ability to draw on knowledge that the balance of influence from parents/carers, peers, authority figures and others alters as the child or young person develops
An ability to draw on knowledge of factors that make it harder for parents/carers to offer consistent or positive parenting (e.g., emotional and cognitive immaturity, mental health difficulties (particularly substance misuse), loss, abuse, social disadvantage and adversity or negative experience of parenting in their own lives)
An ability to draw on knowledge of the positive effects of parent/carer support on:
attachment relationships
child and adolescent development

Play activities

An ability to draw on knowledge of the importance of play for all aspects of social, cognitive and emotional development
An ability to assess whether a child or adolescent's level and type of play is broadly normative for their age group
An ability to draw on knowledge about effective ways of stimulating play activity in young people (e.g., by providing them with appropriate materials, and by descriptive commenting)
An ability to draw on knowledge of the value of young person-led rather than adult-led play activity
An ability to draw on knowledge of the positive and negative impacts of electronic media on child and adolescent development

Family development

An ability to draw on knowledge that the young person and their family needs to be viewed in a number of different contexts including:
their family and other significant relationships
their social and community setting
the professional network(s) involved with them
their cultural setting
the socio-political environment
An ability to draw on knowledge of different family structures and compositions

An ability to draw on knowledge of the family lifecycle and the ways this varies across social contexts and cultures, so as to understand the developmental tasks of specific families
An ability to draw on knowledge of the potential impact of significant family transitions both on the young person and their family (e.g., birth of new family member, starting school, bereavement)
An ability to draw on knowledge of the potential impact on families of social adversity (loss, abuse, social change, socio-economic disadvantage, health inequality)

Knowledge of the external environment and its interaction with child/adolescent development

An ability to draw on knowledge of the challenges and positive opportunities the external environment can present for young people
An ability to draw on knowledge of the impact of the school or college environment including:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the statutory requirement to attend school or college and the subsequent demands of the institution (e.g., having to wear a school uniform, and enforced attendance in particular curriculum areas) and the impact on the young person as a result of these limits to autonomy the effects of summative or continuous assessment through modular work or examinations and the impact this can have on emotional wellbeing the sense of achievement in acquiring new knowledge and skills
An ability to draw on knowledge of the challenges of a becoming a working-aged adult following attendance at school including:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new and unfamiliar levels of autonomy new relationships with adults as workforce peers or managers an increasing sense of independence the need to behave in an adult and professional manner the implications of forthcoming employment or unemployment

An ability to draw on knowledge of the impact of peer relationships including:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inclusion or exclusion in various peer groupings and gangs involvement in risk-taking behaviours, such as smoking, sniffing, alcohol, drugs, promiscuity involvement in antisocial behaviours, such as joyriding, shoplifting, vandalism, intimidation of others the experience of peer support and a growing sense of individual identity

Knowledge and understanding of mental health problems in young people and adults

An ability to draw on knowledge of factors that promote wellbeing and emotional resilience (e.g., good physical health, high self-esteem, secure attachment to caregiver, higher levels of social support)
An ability to draw on knowledge of the range of mental health and neuro-developmental conditions and how these emerge and present in young people and adults
An ability to draw on knowledge of the influence of normal child development and developmental psychopathology on the ways in which mental health difficulties present (e.g., younger children may somatise or act out (rather than verbalise) emotional difficulties)
An ability to draw on knowledge of the social, psychological, family and biological factors associated with the development and maintenance of mental health problems
An ability to draw on knowledge of the diagnostic criteria for child and adolescent mental health conditions specified in the main classification systems (i.e., the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) or the International Classification of Diseases (ICD))
An ability to draw on knowledge of the incidence and prevalence of mental health presentations across different cultures/ethnicities/social classes
An ability to draw on knowledge of problems which commonly co-occur with the mental health presentation
An ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which mental health problems can impact on functioning and individual development (e.g., maintaining intimate, family and social relationships, or the capacity to maintain employment and study)
an ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which the mental health problems of young people can impact on family functioning
An ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which mental health problems can manifest interpersonally, so as to avoid escalating or compounding difficult or problematic behaviour that is directly attributable to the client's mental health condition

Knowledge of legal frameworks relating to working with young people

An ability to draw on knowledge that counselling work with young people is underpinned by a legal framework

An ability to draw on knowledge that the sources and details of child law vary across the four home nations of the UK

an ability to draw on knowledge of the relevant legislation and policies that apply to the settings in which interventions take place

Capacity and informed consent

An ability to draw on knowledge of the legal framework which determines the criteria for capacity and informed consent

Parental rights and responsibilities

An ability to draw on knowledge of the principles of the relevant legislation relating to parental/carer rights and responsibilities

Participation

An ability to draw on knowledge that the legal framework endorses the principle that the young person's view needs to be taken into account when making welfare decisions that concern them

Child protection

An ability to draw on knowledge of contractual obligations, legislation and guidance which relate to the protection of young people

An ability to draw on knowledge of the legal position regarding the physical punishment of young people

Mental health

An ability to draw on knowledge of mental health legislation

Education

An ability to draw on knowledge of legislation and guidance which addresses the educational needs of young people who may face barriers to their learning (e.g., related to their disabilities, physical or emotional health, social or family difficulties, or to their being gifted children) and who may therefore require additional support (e.g., from education, social work and healthcare providers).

Data protection

An ability to draw on knowledge of legislation which addresses issues of data protection and the disclosure of information

Equality

An ability to draw on knowledge of equality legislation designed to protect people from discrimination when accessing services (including the statutory requirement for service providers to make reasonable adjustments for disabled service users)

Sources/web links

Legal Acts accessed at:

Capacity and consent

Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991 at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

British Medical Association (2001) *Consent, Rights and Choices in Health Care for Children and Young People*. London: BMJ Publishing Group.

Department of Health (2007) Mental Capacity Act (2005) Summary Document
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.dca.gov.uk/legal-policy/mental-capacity/mca-summary.pdf>

Mental Capacity Act in England and Wales (2005) at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

NSPCC (2009) Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines: http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/research/questions/gillick_wda61289.html

Gillick competency (England, Wales and Northern Ireland): *Gillick v West Norfolk and Wisbech Area Health Authority and another* (1985) at: http://www.hrcr.org/safrica/childrens_rights/Gillick_WestNorfolk.htm

Confidentiality

Department of Health, Confidentiality: NHS Code of Practice, November 2003
www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4069253

Parental Rights and Responsibilities

Children Scotland Act 1995 at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

The Parental Responsibilities and Parental Rights Agreement (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2009 at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2009/191/made?view=plain>

Participation

Children Scotland Act 1995 at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

Department for children, schools and families (2009) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: articles at: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/strategyandgovernance/uncrc/unitednationsarticles/uncrcarticles/>

UN Convention on the Rights of Children at: <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

UNICEF (2008) Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 3rd revised edition.

Child protection

Children Acts (1989 England and 1995 Scotland) at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

Children Act 2004 in England and Wales at: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrenactreport/#a2004>

Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

Department for Education and Skills (2006) *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

NSPCC (2009) *What is the law on physical punishment in the UK? What do we know about attitudes to physical punishment?* at: http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/questions/physical_punishment_law_attitudes_wda70205.html

The Scottish Government (2008) *The guide to getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)* at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/09/22091734/0>

Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, April 2006 at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/workingtogether/

Mental Health Legislation

Mental Health Act for England and Wales (1983, 1995 and 2007) at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

Mental Health Act (1983): an outline guide at: http://www.mind.org.uk/help/rights_and_legislation/mental_health_act_1983_an_outline_guide

The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

The Mental Capacity Act (England/Wales) (2005) at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

The Scottish Government (2005) *The New Mental Health Act: What's it all about? A short introduction* at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/07/22145851/58527>

Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland: About mental health law at: http://www.mwscot.org.uk/advice_and_information/about_mental_health_law/about_mh_law_in_Scotland.asp

National Institute for Mental Health in England (2009) *The legal aspects of the care and treatment of children and young people with mental disorder: A guide for professionals.*

NHS Education for Scotland (2010) Learning Resource: Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 Reference Guide to the Mental Health Act 1983 (2008) TSO
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_088162

Education

Education Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

Education Act (England) (1996, 2002) at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

Special educational needs changes to the law (England) (2007) at: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/publications/documents/senchangestothelaw/>

Data protection

Data Protection Act 1998 at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

Human Rights Act 1998 at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

Equality

The Equality Act 2010 at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

Human rights

Equality and human rights (Department of Health): <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/Equalityandhumanrights/index.htm>

General texts

Every Child Matters: Change for Children: a range of publications available at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/

Little, M. (2002) The law concerning services for children with social and psychological problems. In: M. Rutter & E. Taylor, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 4th ed. Oxford: Blackwell.

Knowledge of, and ability to operate within, professional and ethical guidelines

Counsellors working with young people may be members of different professional bodies and hence subject to different codes of practice and ethics, many of which have common elements. The following competences have been extracted from the standards set out by the Health Professions Council and a number of profession-specific codes, including those of clinical psychology and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

An ability to draw on knowledge that ethical and professional guidance represents a set of principles that need to be interpreted and applied to unique clinical situations
An ability to draw on knowledge of mental health legislation relevant to professional practice
An ability to draw on knowledge of the relevant codes of ethics and conduct that apply to all professionals, and to the profession of which the counsellor is a member
An ability to draw on knowledge of local and national policies in relation to:
confidentiality and consent
child protection
data protection

Knowledge of ethical principles

An ability to draw on knowledge that ethical practice is informed by a number of key principles:
that counsellors should act in accordance with the trust placed in them
that counsellors should respect clients' rights to be autonomous and self-directed
that counsellors act in the best interests of clients in order to promote their wellbeing
that counsellors should strive to mitigate any harm being caused to the client
that counsellors are committed to the fair and impartial treatment of all clients and the provision of equitable services
that counsellors take steps to enhance their personal and professional wellbeing in order to maintain personal effectiveness
An ability to draw on knowledge that therapeutic work may confront counsellors with conflicts of ethical principles and in such circumstances clinical supervision should be used to resolve these

Ability to self-monitor levels of competence

An ability for professionals to recognise the boundaries of their own competence and not attempt to practise an intervention for which they do not have appropriate training or (where applicable) specialist qualification
An ability for professionals to recognise the limits of their competence, and at such points:

an ability to refer to colleagues or services with the appropriate level of training and/or skill

an ability for professionals to inform service users when the task moves beyond their competence in a manner that maintains their confidence and engagement with services

Ability to identify and minimise the potential for harm

An ability to respond promptly when there is evidence that the actions of a colleague put a service user, or another colleague, at risk of harm by:

acting immediately to correct the situation, if this is possible

reporting the incident to the relevant authorities

cooperating with internal and external investigators

When supervising colleagues, an ability to take reasonable steps to ensure that supervisees recognise the limits of their competence and do not attempt to practise beyond them

An ability to consult or collaborate with other professionals when additional information or expertise is required

Ability to gain consent from service users

An ability to help young people make an informed choice about a proposed therapeutic intervention by setting out its benefits and its risks, along with providing this information in relation to any alternative interventions

An ability to ensure that the young person grants explicit consent to proceeding with an intervention

In the event of consent being declined or withdrawn, and where the nature of their presentation means intervention in the absence of consent is not warranted, an ability to respect the young person's right to make this decision

In the cases where an individual withholds consent but the nature of their presentation warrants an immediate intervention:

an ability to evaluate the risk of the intervention and, where appropriate, proceed as required

an ability to attempt to obtain consent, although this may not be possible

an ability to ensure the young person is fully safeguarded

Ability to maintain confidentiality

An ability to ensure that information about service users is treated as confidential and used only for the purposes for which it was provided

When communicating with other parties:

an ability to identify the parties with whom it is appropriate to communicate

an ability to restrict information to that needed in order to act appropriately

An ability to manage requests for information that are inappropriate (e.g., from estranged family members)

An ability to ensure that clients are informed when and with whom their information may be shared

An ability to restrict the use of personal data:
for the purpose of caring for the young person
to those tasks for which permission has been given by the young person
An ability to ensure that data is stored and managed in line with the provisions of data protection legislation

Ability to maintain appropriate standards of conduct

An ability to ensure that clients are treated with dignity, respect, kindness and consideration
An ability for professionals to maintain professional boundaries by, for example:
ensuring that they do not use their position and/or role in relation to the young person to further their own ends
not accepting gifts, hospitality or loans that may be interpreted as attempting to gain preferential treatment
maintaining clear and appropriate personal and sexual boundaries with service users, their families and carers
An ability for professionals to recognise the need to maintain standards of behaviour that conform with professional codes both in and outside the work context
An ability for professionals to represent accurately their qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience

Ability to maintain standards of competence

An ability to have regard to best available evidence of effectiveness when employing therapeutic approaches
An ability to maintain and update skills and knowledge through participation in continuing professional development
An ability to recognise when fitness to practise has been called into question and report this to the relevant parties (including both local management and the registration body)

Record keeping

An ability to maintain a record for each service user which:
is written promptly
is concise, legible and written in a style that is accessible to its intended readership
identifies the person who has entered the record (i.e., is signed and dated)
An ability to ensure that records are maintained after each contact with service users or with professionals connected with the service user
An ability, where necessary, to update existing records in a clear manner that does not overwrite existing elements (e.g., in order to correct a factual error)
An ability to ensure records are stored securely, in line with local and national policy and guidance

Ability to communicate

An ability to communicate clearly and effectively with service users and other practitioners and services	
An ability to share knowledge and expertise with professional colleagues for the benefit of the service user	
When delegating tasks, an ability to ensure that these are:	
	delegated to individuals with the necessary level of competence and experience to complete the task safely, effectively and to a satisfactory level
	completed to the necessary standard by monitoring progress and outcome
An ability to provide appropriate supervision to the individual to whom the task has been delegated	
An ability to respect the decision of any individual who feels they are unable to fulfil the delegated task through lack of skill or competence	

Ability to advocate for service users

An ability to work with others to promote the health and wellbeing of service users, their families and carers in the wider community by, for example:	
	listening to the concerns of service users
	involving service users in planning their intervention
	maintaining communication with others involved in their care
An ability to draw on knowledge of local services to advocate for the client in relation to access to health and social care, information and services	
An ability to respond to a young person's complaint about their care in a prompt, open and constructive fashion (including an ability to offer an explanation and, if appropriate, an apology, and/or to follow local complaints procedures)	
	an ability to ensure that any subsequent care is not delayed or adversely affected by the complaint or complaint procedure

Sources

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2010) *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy*

British Psychological Society (2009) *Code of Ethics and Conduct: Guidance published by the Ethics Committee of the British Psychological Society*

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (2002) *Rules of Professional Conduct for Chartered Physiotherapists*

College of Occupational Therapists (2010) *Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct*

General Medical Council (2005 to 2009) *Guidance on Good Practice*

Health Professions Council (2008) *Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics*

Nursing & Midwifery Council (2008) *The Code: Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics for Nurses and Midwives*

Knowledge of, and ability to work with, issues of confidentiality, consent and capacity

Knowledge of policies and legislation

An ability to draw on knowledge of local policies on confidentiality and information sharing both within the setting and between different agencies
An ability to draw on knowledge of the principles of the relevant legislation relating to age of legal capacity
An ability to draw on knowledge of the principles of the relevant legislation relating to parental/carer rights and responsibilities
An ability to draw on knowledge of national and local child protection standards, policies and procedures

Knowledge of legal definitions of consent to an intervention

An ability to draw on knowledge that valid legal consent to an intervention is composed of three elements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the person being invited to give consent must be capable of consenting (legally competent) the consent must be freely given the person consenting must be suitably informed
An ability to draw on knowledge that individuals have a right to withdraw or limit consent at any time

Knowledge of capacity

An ability to draw on knowledge relevant to the capacity of individuals to give consent to an intervention:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> that young people aged 16 or over are presumed to have capacity to give or withhold consent, unless there is evidence to the contrary that a child under 16, who is able to understand and make their own decisions, is able to give or refuse consent that the capacity to give consent is a 'functional test' and is not dependent on age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that a child with sufficient capacity and intelligence to understand the nature and consequences of what is proposed is deemed competent to give consent

Knowledge of parental rights and responsibilities

An ability to draw on knowledge that if a young person is judged to be unable to consent to an intervention, consent can be sought from a carer with parental rights and responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an ability to seek legal advice about specific circumstances when consent can be accepted from a person who has care or control of the young person, but who does not have parental rights or responsibilities

Ability to gain informed consent to an intervention from young people and their parents/carers

An ability to give young people and their parents/carers the information they need to decide whether to proceed with an intervention, for example:	
	what the intervention involves
	the potential benefits and risks of the proposed intervention
	what alternatives are available to them
An ability to convey information relevant to decision-making in a form which is developmentally and age appropriate to the young person, for example:	
	using language which is developmentally appropriate
	using pictures, toys and play activity, where appropriate
	offering information at a pace matched to the child's needs
An ability to use an interpreter where the young person's or parent/carer's first language is not that used by the practitioner and their language skills indicate that this is necessary	
Where young people have a disability, an ability to ensure that information is provided in an accessible form (e.g., using an interpreter for children with hearing impairments)	
An ability to invite and to actively respond to questions regarding the proposed intervention	
An ability to address any concerns or fears regarding the proposed intervention	
An ability to draw on knowledge that a young person's capacity to give or withhold consent is not absolute, and varies with the complexity of the intervention and perceptions of risks versus benefits (e.g., a young person may be judged able to consent to relaxation training but not an admission to an inpatient unit)	
An ability to draw on knowledge that even where consent has been granted it is usual to revisit this issue when introducing specific aspects of an assessment or intervention	
Where a young person cannot consent, an ability to gain consent from one person with parental responsibility on behalf of the young person	
	where consent is gained on behalf of the young person, an ability to seek the young person's views as far as possible
Where a young person is able to give informed consent, an ability to consider their consent or refusal where a parent/carer disagrees with their view:	
	an ability to negotiate or problem solve with all parties to identify whether it is possible to reach an agreement
	where withdrawal of consent has implications for the young person's welfare, and an ability to seek and follow through legal advice

Ability to draw on knowledge of confidentiality and information sharing

An ability to draw on knowledge that a duty of confidentiality is owed:	
	to the young person and family members/carers to whom the information relates
	to individuals who have provided information on the understanding it is to be kept confidential
An ability to draw on knowledge that young people under the age of 16 who are deemed capable of giving consent have the same right to confidentiality as an adult	
An ability to draw on knowledge that confidence is breached where the sharing of confidential information is not authorised by those individuals who provided it or to whom it relates	
An ability to draw on knowledge that there is no breach of confidence if:	
	information was provided on the understanding that it would be shared with a limited range of people or for limited purposes, and information has been shared in accordance with that understanding
	there is explicit consent to the sharing
An ability to maintain the young person's right to confidentiality even when a parent/carer or other professional requests information	
An ability to draw on knowledge that it is appropriate to breach confidentiality when withholding information could:	
	place a person (young people, family members, the therapist, or a third party) at risk of significant harm
	prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
	lead to an unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a young person or an adult

Ability to inform young people and their families about issues of confidentiality and information sharing

An ability to explain to young people, parents/carers and professionals the limits of confidentiality and circumstances in which it may be breached, for example when a young person is considered to be at risk	
An ability to inform young people and parents/carers about their service's policy on how information will be shared (e.g., the ways information about counselling will be shared with school staff referrers and other agencies as relevant) and to seek their consent	
An ability to discuss with the young person what information from individual sessions can be shared with their parent/carer	
An ability to seek consent to share information again if:	
	there is significant change in the way the information is to be used
	there is a change in the relationship between the agency and the individual
	there is a need for a referral to another agency that may provide further assessment or intervention
An ability to draw on knowledge that the safeguarding needs of a young person take precedence over issues of consent and confidentiality (e.g., it may not always be necessary to seek consent or inform the family about a referral to a child protection agency if to do so might increase risk to the young person)	

Ability to assess the young person's capacity to consent to information sharing

An ability to gauge the young person's capacity to give consent by assessing whether they:
have a reasonable understanding of what information might be shared, the main reason(s) for sharing it and the implications of sharing or not sharing the information
appreciate and can consider the alternative courses of action open to them
express a clear personal view on the matter (as distinct from repeating what someone else thinks they should do)
are reasonably consistent in their view on the matter (i.e., are not changing their mind frequently)

Ability to share information appropriately and securely

An ability to ensure that when decisions are made to share information the practitioner draws on knowledge of information sharing and guidance at national and local level, and:
shares it only with the person or people who need to know
ensures that it is necessary for the purposes for which it is being shared
checks that it is accurate and up to date
distinguishes fact from opinion
understands the limits of any consent given (especially if the information has been provided by a third party)
establishes whether the recipient intends to pass it on to other people, and ensures the recipient understands the limits of any consent that has been given
ensures that the person to whom the information relates (or the person who provided the information) is informed that you are sharing information, where it is safe to do so
An ability to ensure that information is shared in a secure way and in line with agency, school and/or local authority policies

Sources

Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991 at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/uk>

British Medical Association (2001) *Consent, rights and choices in health care for children and young people*. London, BMJ Publishing Group.

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Ability to work within and across agencies

Effective delivery of competences relating to work within and across organisations depends on their integration with the other core competences and in particular those relating to confidentiality and consent.

Knowledge of the rationale for interagency working

An ability to draw on knowledge that the principal reason for interagency working is when there are indications that working in this way will benefit the welfare of the young person

an ability to determine when work across agencies is an appropriate response to the needs of the young person

An ability to draw on knowledge of the importance of collaborating:

with agencies who are already involved with the care of a child/young person and their family/carers

with agencies whose involvement is important or critical to the welfare and wellbeing of the young person and their family/carers

An ability to draw on knowledge of the benefits of communicating with colleagues from other agencies at an early stage, before problems have developed further

Knowledge of the responsibilities of other professionals/agencies

An ability for counsellors to draw on knowledge of the specific areas for which they and their own service are responsible (in relation to assessment, planning, intervention and review)

An ability to draw on knowledge of the roles, responsibilities, culture and practice of other professionals within the organisation, and professionals from other agencies

An ability to draw on knowledge of the range of agencies who may work with young people and their families, including community resources

Knowledge of local policies and of relevant legislation

An ability to draw on knowledge of local policies on confidentiality and information sharing both within the organisation and between different agencies

An ability to draw on knowledge of national and local child protection standards, policies and procedures

An ability to draw on knowledge of national and local policies and procedures regarding the assessment and management of risk

An ability to draw on knowledge of local procedures when clients fail to attend appointments

Knowledge of inter-agency procedures

An ability to draw on knowledge of procedures for raising concerns when a young person is at risk of harm or there are indicators that they are not achieving their potential (e.g., in educational or emotional/social domains), including:	
	procedures for making a referral to other services
	procedures for sharing concerns with other services and professionals
	procedures for sharing concerns with a Designated Child Protection Teacher/child protection lead
An ability to draw on knowledge of common assessment procedures designed to achieve a holistic assessment of the young person (e.g., Integrated Assessment Framework (IAF), Common Assessment Form (CAF))	
An ability to draw on knowledge of common recording procedures across agencies (e.g., shared IT systems/databases)	

Information sharing

An ability to judge on a case-by-case basis the benefits and risks of sharing information against the benefits and risks of not sharing information	
An ability to discuss issues of consent and confidentiality with the young person and their family/carers*:	
	in relation to sharing information with other professionals/agencies
	to secure and record their consent to share information
An ability to draw on knowledge of when it is appropriate to share information without the consent of the young person or family/carer	
An ability to collate relevant information gathered from others and enter this into the paper or electronic record	
An ability to evaluate information received from others, including:	
	distinguishing observation from opinion
	identifying any significant gaps in information
An ability to share relevant information with the appropriate agencies (based on the principle of a 'need to know')	
	an ability to assess when sharing of information is not necessary and/or when requests for sharing information should be refused
An ability to ensure that information sharing is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure	
An ability to record what has been shared, with whom and for what purpose	
An ability to seek advice when in doubt about sharing information	

* detailed consideration of consent and confidentiality can be found in the relevant section of the competence framework

Communication with other agencies/professionals

An ability to assure effective communication with other professionals/agencies by:	
	ensuring that their perspectives and concerns are listened to
	ensuring that one's own perspective and concerns are listened to
	explicitly acknowledging those areas where there are common perspectives and concerns, and where there are differences
	where there are differences in perspective or concern, identifying and acting on any implications for the delivery of an effective intervention
An ability to provide timely written and oral communication:	
	an ability to hold in mind the fact that professional terms, abbreviations and acronyms may not be understood or interpreted in the same way by workers from different agencies
An ability to identify potential barriers to effective communication, and where possible to develop strategies to overcome these	

Coordinating work with other agencies

An ability to contribute to interagency meetings at which work across agencies is planned and coordinated*	
An ability to negotiate aims, objectives and timeframes for each agency's assessment and/or intervention	
An ability to explain to other professionals:	
	the counselling approach being used
	any assumptions that are made by the approach, and that may not be obvious to, or shared with, workers in other agencies
An ability regularly to review the outcomes for the young person in relation to specified objectives	

**detailed in the Ability to recognise and respond to concerns about child protection section of this framework*

Recognising challenges to interagency working

An ability to recognise when effective interagency working is compromised and to identify the reasons for this, for example:	
	institutional/systemic factors (such as power differentials or struggles for dominance of one agency over another)
	conflicts of interest
	lack of trust between professionals (especially where this reflects the 'legacy' of previous contacts)
	lack of clarity about who takes responsibility in each agency
An ability to recognise when another agency has failed to respond appropriately to a request, referral or concern, and to address this directly	
An ability to recognise when one is at risk of working beyond the boundaries of one's professional reach	

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Ability to recognise and respond to concerns about child protection

Safeguarding and child protection competences are not ‘stand alone’ competencies and should be read as part of the Children and Young People’s humanistic counselling competency framework.

Effective delivery of child protection competences depends critically on their integration with knowledge of child and family development and transitions; consent and confidentiality; legal issues relevant to child and family work; interagency working; and engaging families and young people.

Knowledge of policies and legislation

An ability to draw on knowledge of national and local child protection standards, policies and procedures
An ability to draw on knowledge of contractual obligations, legislation and guidance which relate to the protection of children
An ability to draw on knowledge of the legal position regarding the physical punishment of children
An ability to draw on knowledge of local policies and protocols regarding:
confidentiality and information sharing
recording of information about young people and their families
An ability to draw on knowledge of the statutory responsibilities of adults (e.g., parents/carers, school staff) to keep young people safe from harm
An ability to draw on knowledge that staff are responsible for acting on concerns about a young person even if the young person is not their client

Knowledge of child protection principles

An ability to draw on knowledge of child protection principles applicable to the setting
An ability to draw on knowledge of the benefits of early identification of at-risk young people and families who can then receive appropriate and timely, preventative and therapeutic interventions
An ability to draw on knowledge of the importance of maintaining a young person-centred approach which ensures a consistent focus on the welfare of the young person and on their feelings and viewpoints
An ability to draw on knowledge that assessment and intervention processes should be continuously reviewed, and should be timed, and tailored to the individual needs of the young person and family

Ability to contribute to an holistic assessment of the young person’s and family’s needs

An ability to contribute to a young person-centred and holistic approach to the assessment of risks which includes consideration of:
--

the young person's developmental needs and the parents'/caregivers' capacity to respond to these needs
the young person and caregiver 'context' (including family, community, culture, educational setting)
strengths and challenges within the young person, their family and the context in which they live
An ability to use knowledge of child and family development* and wellbeing indicators as a frame of reference to inform judgements about any areas of concern (e.g., indicators of parental neglect or failure to thrive)

*detailed in the section of the framework regarding young person and family development and transitions

Ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which neglect and abuse presents

An ability to draw on knowledge of the concept of significant harm:
a threshold that justifies intervention in family life in the best interests of children and young people
An ability to draw on knowledge that there are no absolute criteria for significant harm, but that this is based on consideration of:
the degree and the extent of physical harm
the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect
the extent of premeditation
the presence or degree of threat
the actual, or potential, impact on the young person's health/development/welfare
An ability to draw on knowledge that significant harm can be indicated both by a 'one-off' incident, a series of 'minor' incidents, or as a result of an accumulation of concerns over a period of time

An ability to draw on knowledge of areas in which abuse and neglect are manifested:
physical abuse
emotional abuse
persistent emotional maltreatment which is likely to impact on the young person's emotional development
sexual abuse: the abuse of children and young people through sexual exploitation, which includes:
penetrative and non-penetrative sexual contact
non-contact activities (e.g., watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways)
neglect: usually defined as an omission of care by a child or young person's parent/carer (often due to unmet needs of their own)
persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs
non-organic failure to thrive

children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones, and where physical and genetic reasons for this delay have been medically eliminated

An ability to draw on knowledge of the prevalence of abuse and neglect

An ability to draw on knowledge of the short- and long-term effects of abuse and neglect including their cumulative effects

An ability to draw on knowledge that (while offering support and services to parents of abused children) the needs of the young person are primary

Ability to recognise possible signs of abuse and neglect

An ability to recognise behaviours shown by young people that may be indicators of abuse or neglect, and which may require further investigation, for example:

young people who appear to be frightened of the parent

young people who act in a way that is inappropriate to their age and development

An ability to recognise possible signs of physical abuse, for example:

explanations which are inconsistent with an injury, or an unexplained delay in seeking treatment

parents who seem uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury

repeated or multiple bruising on sites unlikely to be injured as a consequence of everyday activity/accidents (e.g., on the head, around the face, or away from bony parts of the body such as knees and elbows)

bite marks which may be of human, adult origin

An ability to recognise possible signs of emotional abuse, for example:

indicators of serious attachment problems between parent and young person (e.g., anxious, indiscriminate or no attachment)

markedly aggressive or appeasing behaviour towards others

indicators of serious scapegoating within the family

indicators of low self-esteem and lack of confidence

marked difficulties in relating to others

An ability to recognise possible behavioural signs of sexual abuse, for example:

inappropriate sexualised conduct (e.g., sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the young person's age)

continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation

self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts

involvement in sexual exploitation or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners

anxious unwillingness to remove clothes at, for example, sports events (which is not related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

An ability to recognise possible physical signs of sexual abuse, for example:

pain or itching of genital area

blood on underclothes

pregnancy in a young person

An ability to recognise that allegations of sexual abuse by young people may initially be indirect (in order to test the professional's response)

An ability to recognise that, in most cases, evidence of neglect accumulates over time and across agencies

an ability to compile a chronology and discuss concerns with other agencies in order to determine whether minor incidents are indicative of a broader pattern of parental neglect

An ability to recognise possible signs of neglect, for example:

failure by parents or carers to meet essential physical needs (e.g., adequate or appropriate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical or dental care)

failure by parents or carers to meet essential emotional needs (e.g., to feel loved and valued, to live in a safe, predictable home environment)

the young person seems to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause

the young person is left with inappropriate carers (e.g., too young, complete strangers)

the young person is abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

the young person is left with adults who are intoxicated or violent

the young person thrives away from home environment

the young person is frequently absent from school

the young person fails to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss

An ability to recognise the potential for professionals to be desensitised to indicators of neglect when working in areas with a high prevalence of poverty and deprivation

Ability to draw on knowledge of bullying

An ability to draw on knowledge that bullying can become a formal child protection issue when carers, school and other involved agencies fail to address the bullying in an adequate manner

An ability to draw on knowledge that bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves

An ability to draw on knowledge that bullying can take many forms, but the four main types are:

physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, theft)

verbal (e.g., racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling)

emotional (e.g., isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group)

cyber-bullying (use of new technologies by children and young people to intimidate peers, and sometimes those working with them, such as teachers)

An ability to draw on knowledge that bullying can affect the health and development of children, and at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm)

An ability to recognise parental behaviours associated with abuse or neglect

An ability to recognise parental behaviours that are associated with abuse or neglect, and which may require further investigation, for example:

parents who persistently avoid routine child health services and/or treatment when the young person is ill

parents who persistently refuse to allow access on home visits

parents who persistently avoid contact with services or delay the start or continuation of treatment

parents who persistently complain about/to the young person and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)

parents who display a rejecting or punitive parenting style or are not appropriately responsive to their young person's signals of need

parents who are regularly absent or leave the young person with inappropriate carers

parents who fail to ensure the young person receives an appropriate education

Ability to recognise risk factors for, and protective factors against, abuse or neglect

An ability to draw on knowledge that abuse and neglect are more likely to occur when the accumulation of risk factors outweighs the beneficial effects of protective factors

An ability to recognise child, parental and family/social protective factors

An ability to recognise parental risk factors for abuse or neglect, for example:

parents who have serious mental health problems which they do not appear to be managing

parents who are misusing substances

parents who are involved in domestic abuse

parents who are involved in criminal activity

parents who experience learning difficulties etc.

An ability to recognise family/social risk factors for abuse or neglect, for example:

social isolation

socio-economic problems

frequent change of address
history of abuse in the family
male in the household who is not the father
sibling with chronic illness or disability etc.

An ability to recognise child risk factors for abuse or neglect, for example:

young age
early, prolonged separation from mother
recurring illness or hospital admissions
difficult or aggressive temperament
failure to achieve developmental milestones etc.

Ability to respond where a need for child protection has been identified

An ability to ensure that actions taken in relation to child protection are consistent with relevant legislation and local policy and procedure

Ability to report concerns about child protection

An ability to work collaboratively with young people and families to promote their participation in gathering information and making decisions	
An ability to report suspicions of risk to appropriate agencies (e.g., the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (DTCP)) and:	
	to share information with relevant parties, with the aim of drawing attention to emerging concerns
	to use information from other relevant agencies, such as health visitors, GPs, specialist CAMHS
An ability to follow local referral procedures to social work and other relevant agencies, for investigation of concerns or signs of abuse or neglect	
An ability to record information, setting out the reasons for concern and the evidence for it:	
	including the ability to record the reasons for a decision <i>not</i> to report concerns if it is agreed that there is insufficient evidence
An ability to contact and communicate with all those who are at risk, ensuring that they understand the purpose for the contact with, and referral to, other agencies	
An ability to follow local procedures where there is difficulty contacting young people and families and there is a concern that they are missing from the known address	
An ability to follow guidelines on how confidentiality and disclosure will be managed	

Ability to contribute to the development of a child protection plan

An ability to contribute information to multi-agency child protection meetings including child protection case discussions, child protection case conferences, and core group meetings
where necessary, an ability to express a concern or position that is different from the views of others, and to do so during (rather than subsequent to) the meeting
An ability to participate in the development of a multi-agency protection plan that details:
the reasons for the plan
who is involved in delivering the plan
the views of the young person and their family/carers
a summary of the young person's needs
the actions to be taken
the specific outcomes which are required
the resources required
details of any compulsory measures
the timescales for action and for change
arrangements for review of the plan

Ability to contribute to the implementation of protective interventions

An ability to contribute to the implementation of protective interventions which are outlined in the young person's protection plan, aiming to:
reduce or eliminate risk factors for abuse or neglect
build on the strengths and resilience factors of the young person, parent/carer and family
An ability to maintain support for young people and families when compulsory measures are necessary
Where relevant, an ability to maintain therapeutic support for young people and families during an ongoing child protection investigation, and/or when the young person is called to be a witness in court

Ability to record and report on interventions that the counsellor is responsible for

An ability to document decisions and actions taken, and the evidence for taking these decisions
An ability to record and report information about:
what was done
why it was done
whether the desired outcomes have been met
what further help is required
whether the plan can still be managed within the current environment

Interagency working

An ability to draw on knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of other services available to the young person and family
an ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which other services should respond to child protection concerns
An ability to collaborate with all potentially relevant agencies when undertaking assessment, planning, intervention and review
An ability to ensure that there is timely communication with all agencies involved in the case, both orally and in writing.
An ability to escalate concerns within one's own or between other agencies (e.g., when the implementation of the child protection plan is problematic or to ensure sufficient recognition of risk factors and/or signs of abuse)

Ability to seek advice and supervision

An ability for the counsellor to make use of supervision and support from other members of staff in order to manage their own emotional responses to providing care and protection for children
An ability to recognise the limits of one's own expertise and to seek advice from appropriate individuals, for example:
supervisors and/or other members of the counselling team
social workers and other child protection experts
child and family lawyers (e.g., when a young person is due to become a witness)
Caldicott Guardian (regarding complex confidentiality issues)

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Ability to work in a ‘culturally competent’ manner

There are many factors that need to be considered in the development of culturally competent practice, and finding a language that encompasses all of them is a challenge. For example, issues in relation to gender, disability or sexual orientation may vary according to a specific cultural group. Nonetheless, the competences required to work in a culturally competent manner are probably similar, since they relate to the capacity to value diversity and maintain an active interest in understanding the ways in which young people and families/carers may experience specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles, and considering any implications for the way in which an intervention is carried out.

There are of course many ways in which both counsellors and those with whom they work may vary in beliefs, practices and lifestyles. Some may not be immediately apparent, leading to the erroneous assumption that they do not exist. It is also the case that it is the individual’s sense of the impact of specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles that is important (the meaning these have for them) rather than the factors themselves. Almost any therapeutic encounter requires the counsellor to carefully consider potential issues relating to specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles, and relevance to the therapeutic work being offered.

Finally, it is worth bearing in mind that (because issues of specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles often relate to differences in power and to inequalities) counsellors need to be able to reflect on the ways in which power dynamics play out, in the context both of the service they work in and when working with young people and their families.

Basic stance

An ability to draw on knowledge that in working with specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles, it is stigmatising and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours that are problematic, rather than any specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles in young people or their families, and hence:

counsellors should equally value all young people for their particular and unique constellation of characteristics and be aware of (and challenge) stigmatising and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in themselves and others

there is no normative state from which young people and families/carers may deviate, and hence no implication that the normative state is preferred and other states problematic

Knowledge of the significance for practice of specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles

An ability to draw on knowledge that it is the individualised impact of background, lifestyle, beliefs or religious practices which is critical

An ability to draw on knowledge that the demographic groups included in discussion of ‘different’ beliefs, practices or lifestyles are usually those who are potentially subject to disadvantage and/or discrimination, and it is this potential for disadvantage that makes it important to focus on this area

An ability to draw on knowledge that a service user will often be a member of more than one ‘group’ (for example, a gay adolescent from a minority ethnic community) and that, as such, the implications of combinations of lifestyle factors need to be held in mind by counsellors

An ability to maintain an awareness of the potential significance for practice of social and cultural variation across a range of domains, but including:	
	ethnicity
	culture
	gender and gender identity
	religion/belief
	sexual orientation
	socio-economic deprivation
	class
	age
	disability
	family configuration, such as step-parent, single parent
For all clients with whom the counsellor works, an ability to draw on knowledge of the relevance and potential impact of social and cultural factors on the accessibility, effectiveness and acceptability of assessment or therapeutic intervention	

Knowledge of social and cultural factors that may impact on access to the service

An ability to draw on knowledge of cultural issues which commonly restrict or reduce access to interventions, for example:	
	language
	marginalisation
	mistrust of statutory services
	lack of knowledge about how to access services
	the range of cultural concepts, understanding and attitudes about emotional wellbeing and mental health which affect views about help-seeking and the value of a counselling intervention
	stigma, shame and/or fear associated with emotional and mental health problems (which makes it likely that help-seeking is delayed until/unless problems become more severe)
	stigma or shame and/or fear associated with being diagnosed with a mental health disorder
An ability to draw on knowledge of the potential impact of socio-economic status on access to resources and opportunities	
An ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which social inequalities impact on development and on mental health in young people and parents/carers	
An ability to draw on knowledge of the impact of factors such as socio-economic disadvantage or disability on practical arrangements that impact on attendance and engagement (e.g., transport difficulties, poor health)	

Ability to communicate respect and valuing of young people and families

Where young people or families from a specific socio-demographic group are regularly seen within a service, an ability to draw on knowledge of relevant beliefs, practices and lifestyles
An ability to identify protective factors that may be conferred by membership of a specific socio-demographic group (e.g., the additional support offered by an extended family)
An ability to take an active interest in the social and cultural background of families, and hence to demonstrate a willingness to learn about the families' socio-cultural perspective(s) and world view

Ability to gain an understanding of the experience of specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles

An ability to work collaboratively with the young person and their families/carers in order to develop an understanding of their culture and world view, and the implications of any culturally specific customs or expectations for:					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>the therapeutic relationship</td> </tr> <tr> <td>the ways in which childhood is represented</td> </tr> <tr> <td>gender roles</td> </tr> <tr> <td>parenting beliefs and practices</td> </tr> <tr> <td>the ways in which problems are described and presented</td> </tr> </table>	the therapeutic relationship	the ways in which childhood is represented	gender roles	parenting beliefs and practices	the ways in which problems are described and presented
the therapeutic relationship					
the ways in which childhood is represented					
gender roles					
parenting beliefs and practices					
the ways in which problems are described and presented					
an ability to apply this knowledge in order to identify and formulate problems, and intervene in a manner that is culturally sensitive, culturally consistent and relevant					
an ability to apply this knowledge in a manner that is sensitive to the ways in which service users interpret their own culture (and hence recognises the risk of culture-related stereotyping)					
An ability to take an active and explicit interest in the young person's experience of the beliefs, practices and lifestyles pertinent to their community:					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>to help them to discuss and reflect on their experience</td> </tr> <tr> <td>to identify whether and how this experience has shaped the development and maintenance of their presenting problems</td> </tr> <tr> <td>to identify how they locate themselves if they 'straddle' cultures</td> </tr> </table>	to help them to discuss and reflect on their experience	to identify whether and how this experience has shaped the development and maintenance of their presenting problems	to identify how they locate themselves if they 'straddle' cultures		
to help them to discuss and reflect on their experience					
to identify whether and how this experience has shaped the development and maintenance of their presenting problems					
to identify how they locate themselves if they 'straddle' cultures					
An ability to discuss with the young person and their family/carers the ways in which individual and family relationships are represented in their culture (e.g., notions of the self, models of individuality and personal or collective responsibility), and to consider the implications for organisation and delivery of the intervention					

Ability to adapt communication

Where the counsellor does not share the same language as clients, an ability to identify appropriate strategies to ensure and enable the client's full participation in the assessment or intervention:

where an interpreter/advocate is employed, an ability to draw on knowledge of the strategies which need to be in place for an interpreter/advocate to work effectively and in the interests of the client

An ability to adapt communication with young people and parents/carers with a disability (e.g., using communication aids or by altering the language, pace and content of sessions)

Ability to employ and interpret standardised assessments/measures

An ability to ensure that standardised assessments/measures are employed and interpreted in a manner which takes into account the demographic membership of the young person and their carers, for example:

if the measure is not available in the client's first language, an ability to take into account the implications of this when interpreting results

if a bespoke translation is attempted, an ability to cross-check the translation to ensure that the meaning is not inadvertently changed

if standardisation data (norms) is not available for the demographic group of which the client is a member, an ability explicitly to reflect this issue in the interpretation of results

Ability to adapt interventions

An ability to draw on knowledge of the conceptual and empirical research base which informs thinking about the impact of social and cultural factors on the effectiveness of psychological interventions

Where there is evidence that specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles are likely to impact on the accessibility of an intervention, an ability to make appropriate adjustments to the intervention and/or the manner in which it is delivered, with the aim of maximising its potential benefit to the client

An ability to draw on knowledge that culturally adapted treatments should be judiciously applied, and are warranted:

if evidence exists that a particular clinical problem encountered by a client is influenced by membership of a given community

if there is evidence that clients from a given community respond poorly to certain evidence-based approaches

Ability to demonstrate awareness of the effects of counsellor's own background

An ability for counsellors of all backgrounds to draw on an awareness of their own group membership and values and how these may influence their perceptions of the client, the client's problem, and the therapeutic relationship

An ability for counsellors to reflect on power differences between themselves and the young person or parent/carer

An ability to empower young people and their families through using collaborative working practices *

* see *Engaging young people and their families competences*

Ability to identify and to challenge inequality

An ability to identify inequalities in access to services and take steps to overcome these:

an ability to consider ways in which access to, and use of, services may need to be facilitated for individual clients with whom the clinician is working (e.g., home visiting, flexible working, linking families with community resources)

where it is within the remit/role of the clinician, an ability to identify client groups whose needs are not being met by current service design/procedures, to identify potential reasons for this, and to identify and implement potential solutions

Ability to engage and work with young people, parents and carers

An ability to begin the process of engagement prior to the initial appointment by providing clients with information about the service and the nature of the initial appointment (e.g., by providing service information leaflets), with the aim of reducing anxiety about the appointment
an ability to adapt information in line with the developmental stage of the young person (including young people with learning disabilities/sensory impairments, etc.)
An ability to consider information from the referral and from the young person themselves about whether the appointment venue will present any access difficulties (due to disability, etc.)
where feasible, an ability to offer the young person who may face barriers to access, a choice of appointment venue
An ability to adapt the physical environment of the counselling room in ways which reduce anxiety and promote engagement with the young person (e.g., through the availability of comfortable seating, the provision of developmentally appropriate creative/non-verbal communication materials)

Ability to engage all family members

Where a counsellor is meeting with the family of a young person, an ability to engage all members of the family attending the appointment in an empathic, respectful and even-handed way:
an ability to give each member of the family the opportunity to communicate/participate
an ability to show an interest in all communications, including the behaviour, drawings and play interactions of younger children
An ability to make explicit and value the unique perspective of each individual on the functioning of the family
An ability to facilitate the involvement of individuals who have a restricted capacity to participate (e.g., through developmental, sensory or emotional problems)

Ability to communicate with a young person and other family members

An ability to tailor the language, pace and content of the session to match the strengths, abilities and capacities of the young person and other family members, as required
An ability to decide whether to involve an interpreter (e.g., when the first language of some or all members of the family is different from that of the professional working with them)
An ability to work with an interpreter, for example:
meeting with the interpreter before sessions to agree how they will operate, and to identify any key issues, for example:
identifying those members of the family for whom the interpreter's services are required
discussing issues relating to confidentiality
checking that the interpreter understands technical terms and/or concepts and can communicate these accurately (and agreeing a process for checking that these have been understood by the young person/family)

self-monitoring during sessions to ensure that the language used can be interpreted accurately (e.g., speaking slowly and clearly and using short, unambiguous phrases, avoiding jargon, clarifying any terminology that the interpreter does not understand)

Where appropriate, an ability to encourage the young person or their family to involve an advocate (e.g., to aid in the process of engagement and communication)

An ability to check regularly that the young person and other family members understand what is being said to them

An ability to summarise information the young person or family has conveyed in order to check that this has been understood accurately

An ability to help the young person and other family members feel comfortable and confident to ask questions when they are uncertain or confused (e.g., by responding positively to questions, validating the appropriateness of questions, or actively prompting them to ask questions)

An ability to provide answers to questions in an honest and straightforward manner

an ability for the therapist to be clear when they need more information in order to answer questions, and to seek this information from an appropriate authority or source

Ability to develop a positive alliance

An ability to draw on knowledge of therapist factors which help to develop a positive alliance (e.g., being respectful, warm, friendly, open and affirming)

An ability to maintain a non-judgemental, non-blaming stance

An ability to work in a culturally sensitive, anti-discriminatory manner

an ability to be respectful and valuing of diversity and difference of experiences, approaches, opinions, beliefs, age, gender, sexuality, lifestyles, ability/disability, race/ethnicity

Ability to use and respond to humour and play

An ability to use humour and play in a manner that is matched to the developmental level of its intended recipients

An ability to use humour as an aid to help clients (e.g., to normalise their experience or to reduce tension), but also recognising its risks (e.g., of invalidating feelings, acting as a distraction from/avoidance of feelings, or creating 'boundary violations')

An ability to respond to clients' humour in a manner that is congruent with its intent, and responsive to any implied meanings

Ability to promote understanding about the service/interventions on offer

An ability to explore the young person and other family members' expectations of their involvement with the counselling service and to identify any concerns they may have about engaging	
An ability to generate a sense of hope for positive change, for example by providing information on the service and intervention/service options	
An ability to ensure that young people and other family members understand:	
	how the counselling service works, using developmentally appropriate methods (written and oral) to aid this understanding
	how the service will manage confidentiality
	when and how information will be communicated to other agencies

Ability to work in partnership with young people and other family members

An ability to work in a manner that is collaborative and aims to empower young people and any other family members involved by:	
	helping the young person to identify their goals and objectives
	translating technical concepts into 'plain' language that young people and families can understand and follow
	sharing responsibility for agendas and session content
	promoting collaborative problem-solving
	acknowledging that the counsellor and young person and other family members involved bring different expertise to counselling
	reinforcing and validating the insights of young people and other family members involved

Ability to manage challenges to engagement

An ability to monitor the level of engagement throughout the counselling	
An ability to identify threats to engagement which arise from:	
	in-session issues (e.g., young person/family member(s) withdrawing because they feel guilty or blamed, or leaving the counselling room unexpectedly before the end of the session)
	practical issues (e.g., school timetable clashes, parent/carer's working hours if they are involved in the counselling at any point)
	social issues (e.g., stigma associated with mental distress and accessing counselling, or fear of discrimination)
An ability to recognise and explore any impacts of the young person or wider family's previous experiences of mental health and/or contact with psychological services on their current engagement	

An ability to detect and manage the impact of psychological factors that might impact on the young person, or their family's capacity to attend sessions, process information and learn new skills (e.g., family illness, substance misuse, attachment histories)	
	an ability to manage these factors, for example by sequential or parallel work with adult mental health services
An ability for the counsellor to use supervision to reflect and act on any threats to engagement that arise from their own behaviours	

Ability to engage the young person and family/carers in routine service user participation

An ability to engage the young person and any other relevant family members/carers in routine service user participation by working in a collaborative manner which involves everyone in decisions about their care
An ability to involve the young person and any other relevant family members/carers in the routine evaluation of interventions/services
An ability to involve the young person and any other relevant family members/carers in the planning of service developments, where appropriate

Sources

HeadsUpScotland (2006) *New-to-CAMHS Teaching Package*. HeadsUpScotland: National Project for Children and Young people's Mental Health: Scotland

NES (2004) Promoting the wellbeing and meeting the mental health needs of children and young people – a development framework for communities agencies and specialists involved in supporting children, young people and their families.

Nixon, B. (2011) NCSS National Workforce Programme. *Essential capabilities for effective emotional and mental health support*.

Public Health Institute of Scotland (2003) *Needs assessment report on child and adolescent mental health*. Final report.

Skills for Health *Core Functions Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Tiers 3, 4*

Ability to communicate with young people of differing ages, developmental level and background

An ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which developmental differences usually manifest themselves, in relation to the young person's:	
	language
	thinking and understanding
	expression of affect
	behaviour
An ability to draw on knowledge that engagement and contact takes place at two levels:	
	through speech and conversation
	through play, behaviour and other non-verbal channels

Knowledge of the impact of development on the young person's understanding of, and participation in, counselling work

An ability to draw on knowledge of attachment theory and its implications for engagement	
An ability to draw on knowledge that:	
	there is a significant span of developmental stages across childhood and adolescence which has implications for therapeutic work
	developmental differences mean that young people vary widely in their presentation and adjustment/adaption
An ability to draw on knowledge that younger clients will have a more concrete and egocentric understanding of:	
	their own mental state
	the mental states of others
	interpersonal situations
An ability to draw on knowledge that because young people may have only a rudimentary understanding of the purpose of counselling the counsellor should help to extend their awareness and understanding by communicating this information about counselling in a developmentally appropriate way (e.g., using visual aids when working with younger clients)	
An ability to understand that, when working with young people, behaviour which may be perceived as difficult or challenging is often a form of communication	
An ability to draw on knowledge that young people may often have difficulty putting their concerns and feelings into words, and:	
	that young people may need support to share concerns and feelings
	that younger clients may use fewer, simpler words

that short replies (such as 'I don't know', and shrugs) are common in young people-focused counselling conversations

An ability to draw on knowledge that, because young people will have difficulty understanding questions that are not tailored to their developmental level, the counsellor will need to adjust their language appropriately

An ability to draw on knowledge that using leading, multiple and double questions can be confusing for a young person

Providing developmentally appropriate information about the session(s)

An ability to provide developmentally appropriate information about the session(s) in order to reduce anxiety and increase trust in the counsellor, and to discuss:

the aim of the session(s)

how the therapist will manage confidentiality and its limits

how and what information will be shared with the parent/carer and other agencies

Ability to engage with the young person's perspective

An ability to draw on knowledge that young people often need to have spent some time with the counsellor before feeling able to express themselves

an ability to show patience and persistence to help the young person to express themselves

An ability to draw on knowledge of the language, attitudes, behaviours and interests of children and young people of comparable age to the young person

An ability to show interest in the child as a person

An ability to show 'neutrality' in relation to problematic behaviour

An ability to stay close to the young person's language, emotional state, and developmental capacities

An ability to help the young person adjust to the counselling conversation, for example by:

using play materials and other creative resources

Utilising developmentally appropriate activities to aid engagement

An ability to draw on knowledge that, where young people find it difficult to engage with the counsellor in particular settings (e.g., a formal one-to-one interview room) alternative settings or adjustments to the setting may need to be considered

An ability to engage clients of a younger age by observing and commenting on their play and behaviour with a variety of toys/creative activities

An ability to communicate with younger clients using play activities

An ability to help the young person communicate and engage with the counsellor by making use of a diverse range of creative activities (e.g., play materials, pictures, art and drama activities)

Ability to help the young person express themselves verbally

An ability to help the young person understand by 'scaffolding' communication	
An ability to initiate contact by:	
	keeping ideas concrete
	using simple words (and few of them)
	breaking down questions into component parts
	moving from less to more difficult questions
	moving from less to more difficult topics
	letting the young person express some positives first
	giving the young person choices about what they speak about
An ability to use scales to help the child communicate	
	analogue scales (e.g., '1-10'; 'little, medium, lots' etc)
	visual scales (e.g., smiley or sad faces)
An ability to encourage the child by thinking aloud for them (e.g., 'I wonder if ...')	
An ability to normalise the child's experience (e.g., 'children often think that ...')	
An ability to help the child offer an opinion (e.g., 'Do you think that ...')	
An ability to move back to easier 'terrain' if the young person becomes distressed or anxious	
An ability to move between 'trivial' and clinically relevant issues in order to moderate distress or anxiety	
An ability to move from play materials to verbal discussion and back again	

Engaging the young person when the parent/carer is present

If young people and parents/carers are seen together, an ability to set out the parameters of the meeting, in particular to ensure that the young person is aware:	
	that all parties will be given an opportunity to talk and to have their point of view heard
	that the counsellor understands that they may have a different point of view from their parents/carers, and that the counsellor is interested in hearing this
An ability to repeat and re-phrase important content from the counselling conversation for the young person	
An ability to explain to the young person the content and purpose of any assessment procedures which are given to parents/carers (e.g., consent forms, rating scales)	

Sources

HeadsUpScotland (2006) *New-to-CAMHS Teaching Package*. HeadsUpScotland: National Project for Children and Young people's Mental Health: Scotland

NES (2004) Promoting the wellbeing and meeting the mental health needs of children and young people – a development framework for communities agencies and specialists involved in supporting children, young people and their families.

Nixon, B. (2011) NCSS National Workforce Programme. *Essential capabilities for effective emotional and mental health support*.

Public Health Institute of Scotland (2003) *Needs assessment report on child and adolescent mental health*. Final report.

Skills for Health *Core Functions Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Tiers 3, 4*

Knowledge of psychopharmacology in work with young people

Knowledge of psychopharmacology for young people with mental health problems

An ability to draw on knowledge of the role of medication in the treatment of young people with mental health problems
An ability to draw on knowledge of evidence for the benefits both of medication alone and medication offered in combination with psychological interventions
An ability to draw on knowledge of medications commonly prescribed in child and adolescent psychopharmacology, and the conditions for which they are employed
An ability to draw on knowledge that medications have both benefits and risks
An ability to draw on knowledge of national guidance for treatment of child and adolescent disorders that includes recommendations regarding the role of medication (e.g., NICE or SIGN guidelines)
An ability to discuss with young people and their families the potential role of medication in their treatment
An ability to discuss with appropriately qualified health professionals the risks, benefits and appropriateness of medication for particular clients

Knowledge of models of intervention, and their employment in practice

Knowledge of therapeutic models

An ability to draw on knowledge of the theory and principles underpinning therapeutic models commonly applied in counselling young people, e.g.:

humanistic counselling

cognitive behavioural therapy

psychodynamic therapy

play and expressive arts-based therapies

systemic therapies

interventions based on social learning theory (e.g. group work, parenting work)

solution-focused therapy

narrative therapy

integrative, eclectic and pluralistic therapies

An ability for counsellors to draw on detailed knowledge of any therapeutic models that they are applying

An ability to draw on knowledge of the evidence base as it relates to the models employed in counselling young people and to:

update this knowledge regularly (e.g. as new guidelines are published through research digests, or through reading original research reports)

apply this knowledge to inform decision-making about the range of models employed

An ability to draw on knowledge of factors common to all therapeutic approaches*:

supportive factors:

a positive working relationship between counsellor and client characterised by warmth, respect, acceptance and empathy, and trust

the active participation of the client

counsellor expertise

opportunities for the client to discuss matters of concern and to express their feelings

learning factors:

advice

corrective emotional experience

feedback

exploration of internal frame of reference

changing expectations of personal and interpersonal effectiveness

assimilation of problematic experiences

action factors:

emotional and behavioural regulation

developing a sense of agency

encouragement to face difficult feelings

reality testing

experience of successful coping

An ability to draw on knowledge of the principles which underlie the particular model being applied, using this to inform the application of the specific techniques which characterise it

An ability to draw on knowledge of the age group or developmental level for whom the intervention is appropriate

An ability to draw on knowledge of the principles of the model in order to implement counselling in a manner which is flexible and responsive to client need, but which also ensures that all relevant components are included:

an ability to adapt the techniques used in an intervention so as to match them to the age and developmental level of the young person.

* classification adapted from:

Lambert, M.J. and Ogles, B.M (2004) The efficacy and effectiveness of psychotherapy pp139–193 in M.J. Lambert Bergin and Garfield's Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behaviour Change (5th Edition) New York: Wiley

Ability to foster and maintain a good therapeutic alliance, and to grasp the client's perspective and 'world view'

In relation to working with young people (and throughout this document) the term 'client' can refer to the young person, carer/parent or family.

Understanding the concept of the therapeutic alliance

An ability to draw on knowledge that the therapeutic alliance is usually seen as having three components:

the relationship or bond between counsellor and client

consensus between counsellor and client regarding the techniques/methods employed in the therapy

consensus between counsellor and client regarding the goals of therapy

An ability to draw on knowledge that all three components contribute to the maintenance of the alliance

Knowledge of therapist factors associated with the alliance

An ability to draw on knowledge of counsellor factors which increase the probability of forming a positive alliance:

being flexible and allowing the client to discuss issues which are important to them

being respectful

being warm, friendly and affirming

being open

being alert and active

being able to show honesty through self-reflection

being trustworthy

being able to demonstrate an understanding of the client's perspective and their situation

Knowledge of counsellor factors which reduce the probability of forming a positive alliance:

being rigid

being critical

making inappropriate self-disclosure

being distant

being aloof

being distracted

making inappropriate use of silence

Capacity to develop the alliance

An ability to listen to the client's concerns in a manner which is non-judgmental, supportive and sensitive, and which conveys a comfortable attitude when the client describes their experience
An ability to ensure that the client is clear about the rationale for the intervention being offered
An ability to gauge whether the client understands the rationale for the intervention, has questions about it, or is skeptical about the rationale, and to respond to these concerns openly and non-defensively in order to resolve any ambiguities
An ability to help the client express any concerns or doubts they have about the intervention and/or the counsellor, especially where this relates to mistrust or skepticism
An ability to help the client articulate their goals for the therapy, and to gauge the degree of consistency between the aims of the client and counsellor

Capacity to grasp the client's perspective and 'world view'

An ability to apprehend the ways in which the client characteristically understands themselves and the world around them
An ability to hold the client's world view in mind throughout the course of the therapy and to convey this understanding through interactions with the client, in a manner that allows the client to correct any misapprehensions
An ability to hold the client's world view in mind, while retaining an independent perspective and guarding against identification with the client

Capacity to maintain the alliance

Capacity to recognise and to address threats to the therapeutic alliance ('alliance ruptures')

An ability to recognise when strains in the alliance threaten the progress of therapy
An ability to deploy appropriate interventions in response to disagreements about tasks and goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an ability to check that the client is clear about the rationale for counselling and to review this with them and/or clarify any misunderstandings an ability to help clients understand the rationale for counselling through using/drawing attention to concrete examples in the session an ability to judge when it is best to refocus on tasks and goals which are seen as relevant or manageable by the client (rather than explore factors which are giving rise to disagreement)
An ability to deploy appropriate interventions in response to strains in the bond between therapist and client: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an ability for the counsellor to give and ask for feedback about what is happening in the here-and-now interaction, in a manner which invites exploration with the client an ability for the counsellor to acknowledge and accept their responsibility for their contribution to any strains in the alliance

where the client recognises and acknowledges that the alliance is under strain, an ability to help the client make links between the rupture and their usual style of relating to others

an ability to allow the client to assert any negative feelings about their relationship with the counsellor

an ability to help the client explore any fears they have about expressing negative feelings about their relationship with the counsellor

Sources:

Ackerman, S. J., & Hilsenroth, M. J. (2001). A review of therapist characteristics and techniques negatively impacting the therapeutic alliance. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 38, 171–185.

Ackerman, S. J., & Hilsenroth, M. J. (2003). A review of therapist characteristics and techniques positively impacting the therapeutic alliance. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 23, 1–33

Safran J.D. and Muran J.C. (2000) *Negotiating the therapeutic alliance* New York: Guilford Press

Ability to work with the emotional content of the session

Management of strong emotions which interfere with effective change

An ability to help the young person achieve an optimal level of emotional arousal by containing emotions that are overwhelming and helping them get in touch with emotions which are being avoided
An ability to help the young person process emotional issues that interfere with effective change (e.g. hostility, anxiety, excessive anger, avoidance of strong affect).
An ability to introduce techniques designed to help young people manage and contain strong emotions and their associated behaviours (e.g. anger and aggression), and which are appropriate to the developmental stage of the young person e.g.:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> naming emotions exhibited by the young person stating the 'rules' of the therapy room, and indicating what behaviour is appropriate/inappropriate use of time out procedures
An ability to help parents/carers support the young person's capacity to express emotion in an appropriate manner in the session

Eliciting emotions that facilitate change

An ability to help the young person access, differentiate and experience his/her emotions so as to facilitate change.
An ability to explore young people's emotions using developmentally appropriate techniques (e.g. by exploring themes in a young person's play or other symbolic communications, by ascribing feelings to characters in the young person's play, or through role play exercises)

Ability to reflect on the young person's emotional expression/behaviour

An ability to understand that the young person's emotional expression (including aggressive behaviour) is a form of communication
An ability to reflect on the meaning of the behaviour/emotional expression and its relation to the current and past context
An ability to describe the emotion/behaviour and to explore its meaning in collaboration with the young person
An ability for the counsellor to reflect on their own reaction to the emotional/behavioural expression and their influence on the young person's behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an ability for the counsellor to make use of supervision to reflect (and if need be act) on these issues

Ability to manage endings and service transitions

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge of national and local guidance on the assessment of risk relating to a young person ending contact with the counselling service, including policies, procedures and standards in relation to:
child protection.
risk assessment and management.
consent, confidentiality and information sharing.
An ability to draw on knowledge of local procedures in response to 'failure to attend' appointments
An ability to draw on knowledge of local services to which the young person may be referred at the end of contact with the counselling service (e.g. adult mental health services, community-based services, CAMHS, school pastoral staff)

Working with planned endings

An ability to prepare the young person for ending therapy by explicitly referring to the time-limited nature of the counselling at the outset, and throughout therapy, as appropriate (e.g. in connection with discussions about loss)
An ability to assess any risks to the young person that may arise during or after discharge from the service
An ability to help the young person express feelings about endings including any feelings of hostility and disappointment with the limitations of the counselling and the counsellor
An ability to help the young person make connections between their feelings about ending in therapy and other losses/separations
An ability to help the young person explore any feelings of anxiety about managing without the counsellor
An ability to reflect on the process of the intervention as well as what they have learnt and gained from counselling
An ability to prepare the young person for any transition to another service (e.g. by providing them with information about what the service offers, or arranging joint appointments with the new service)

Working with premature or unplanned endings

Where possible, an ability to explore with the young person and their parents/carers (if relevant) why they wish to terminate contact with the service earlier than originally planned
An ability to establish whether it is the young person's individual wish to end contact with the service or whether it has been influenced by other family members, peers etc
An ability to explore with the young person and any involved parents/carers whether their concerns about the intervention or service can be addressed
An ability to assess any risk to the young person from an early ending with the service
An ability to contact relevant professionals or agencies regarding an early ending

Ability to work with groups of young people and/or parents/carers

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge of the characteristics of the target group population for whom the group intervention is designed e.g. age/developmental stage, presenting problems etc.

An ability to draw on knowledge of the theory or model of therapy underpinning the group intervention (e.g. humanistic theory, anger management, improving communications skills, social learning theory, CBT, psychodynamic theory)

Ability to plan the group

An ability to estimate the likely demand for the group by identifying the number of clients who:

meet the criteria for the group (e.g. age, presenting difficulties)

are likely to be receptive to a group approach

would be able to attend the group at a specified time and on a regular basis

An ability to ensure that there is managerial/ team support for the group (e.g. obtaining appropriate accommodation, resources and referrals)

An ability to plan the basic structure and content of the group, such as:

practicalities (e.g. setting, timing, refreshments, child care facilities)

outline content of sessions

roles of all staff running the group

any additional/specific resources required for group sessions

any evaluation procedures

Ability to recruit service users to the group

An ability to specify and apply inclusion and exclusion criteria for the group.	
An ability to explore collaboratively with young people the appropriateness of the group for their needs:	
	an ability to provide information on the content and likely effectiveness of the group intervention
	an ability to outline any alternative intervention options or services which may be more acceptable to the service user
An ability to explore (and where possible address) any barriers to participation in the group, such as:	
	practical barriers (e.g. transport, school-work etc.)
	social barriers (e.g. worries about the stigma of attending)
	emotional barriers (e.g. social anxiety, guilt, shame, hopelessness)
	historical factors (e.g. previous negative experiences of groups)
An ability to negotiate individualised goals with each group member	

Ability to follow the model of group intervention

An ability to implement the components of the group intervention, including:	
	structuring the group (e.g. ordering and timing of material, use of media, homework)
	specific intervention techniques
	management of group and change processes
For manualised groups, an ability to adhere to the sequence of activities outlined in the manual.	
	an ability to draw on knowledge of manualised activities so that they can be introduced fluently and in a timely manner

Ability to manage group process

Establishing the group

An ability to apply knowledge of group processes to establish an environment which is physically and emotionally safe, by:

discussing the 'ground rules' of the group (e.g. maintaining the confidentiality of group members, taking turns to speak, starting and ending the group on time) in a manner that is appropriate to the developmental stage of group members

'safeguarding' the ground rules by drawing attention to any occasions on which they are breached, in a manner that is sensitive to the developmental stage of group members

helping all group members to participate by monitoring and attending to their emotional state

monitoring and regulating self-disclosure by both members and group leaders in order to maintain an environment where members can share

An ability to identify and manage any emotional or physical risk to group leaders, group participants and (where parents/carers are involved) children of group members.

Engaging group members

An ability to engage group members in a manner that is appropriate to their developmental stage and congruent with the therapeutic model being employed

An ability to match the content and pacing of group sessions, presentations and discussions to the characteristics of group members (e.g. in terms of age range, ability levels, attention span, cultural characteristics)

An ability to build positive rapport with individual members of the group:

an ability to monitor the impact of these individual relationships on other members of the group, and if necessary address and manage any tensions that emerge

An ability to manage the group environment in a way that helps all members to participate on a level with which they feel comfortable

When appropriate to the model of intervention, an ability to use modelling and explicit social reinforcement to encourage the participation of group members.

Managing potential challenges to group engagement

An ability to promote and encourage regular attendance, while not stigmatising those who fail to attend sessions
An ability to recognise when individuals form subgroups and to manage the impact of these relationships on overall group dynamics
Where appropriate to the model of therapy, an ability to circumvent behaviour problems by actively redirecting and re-engaging young people who are distracted and selectively attending to pro-social behaviours
An ability to plan for, reflect on, and manage potential challenges to the group including:
disruptive behaviour
persistent lateness/absence, or non-engagement in sessions
group members who leave the group early
members who are over voluble or who dominate the group
high levels of distress displayed by a group member
where the emotional states of individuals impact on the other members of the group, an ability to attend to this so as to ensure others do not become overwhelmed or disengaged

Ability to manage the ending of the group

An ability to prepare group members for the ending of the group by signalling the ending of the therapy at the outset and throughout group sessions, as appropriate
An ability to draw on knowledge that the ending of the group may elicit feelings in the group member connected to other personal experiences of loss/separation
An ability to help the group member express any feelings of anxiety, anger or disappointment that they may have about ending the group
An ability to review the themes covered in the group, in a manner that is appropriate to the developmental stage of the service user and the model being applied
An ability to reflect on progress made as a result of participation, and to celebrate this in a manner that is appropriate to the developmental stage of the service user and model being applied

Ability to evaluate the group

An ability to review the young person goals for the group
An ability to draw on knowledge of appropriate strategies and tools for evaluation, and:
to draw on knowledge regarding the interpretation of measures
to draw on knowledge of the ways in which the reactivity of measures and self-monitoring procedures can bias client feedback
to provide a rationale for the evaluation strategy to group participants
to process feedback in a sensitive and meaningful manner

Ability to use supervision

An ability to use supervision to reflect on group processes
An ability for group leaders to reflect on their own impact on group processes

References

- Barrett, P.M. (2004) *FRIENDS for life group leaders' manual for children* Australian Academic Press
- Barrett, P.M. (2005) *FRIENDS for life group leaders' manual for youth* Australian Academic Press
- Sanders, M. R., Markie-Dadds, C., & Turner, K. M. T. (2001). *Practitioner's manual for Standard Triple P*. Milton, Australia: Families International.
- Stock-Whitaker, D. (1985). *Using Groups to Help People*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Webster-Stratton, C. *The Incredible Years: School Age Basic Series*
- Webster-Stratton, C. (1990) *The Incredible Years: The Children's Small Group Training Series. Therapist's Guide for 'Dinosaur School' Treatment Program*.
- Young Minds (2011). *Talking about Talking Therapies: Thinking and planning how best to make good and accessible talking therapies available to children and young people*.

Ability to make use of measures (including monitoring of outcomes)

Knowledge of commonly used measures

An ability to draw on knowledge of measures commonly used in counselling young people:
measures of the young person's functioning (e.g. YP Core; Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ); Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS), Outcome Rating Scale (ORS))
goal-based measures (e.g., Goal based Outcome Measure)
symptom-specific measures (e.g. RCADS)
service satisfaction questionnaires (e.g. Experience of Service Questionnaire (ESQ))

Knowledge of the purpose and application of measures

An ability to draw on knowledge of the purpose of the measure (i.e. what it specifically aims to detect or to measure), for example:
measures used in outcome evaluation that are sensitive to therapeutic change
measures used in a comprehensive assessment to assess particular clinical symptoms (e.g. symptoms of depression).
An ability to draw on knowledge relevant to the application of a measure, e.g.:
scoring and interpretation procedures
guidance on the confidentiality of the measure and how results should be shared with other professionals and families.
any qualifications required in order to administer the measure
characteristics of the test that may influence its use (e.g. brevity, or 'user-friendliness')
An ability to draw on knowledge of procedures for scoring and for interpretation of the measure

Ability to administer measures

An ability to judge when a young person may need assistance when completing a measure
Where relevant, an ability to administer parallel versions of a measure to young people, parents and teachers
An ability to take into account the young person's attitude to the measure, and their behaviours while completing it, when interpreting the results
An ability to score and interpret the results of the measure using the appropriate guidelines
An ability to interpret information obtained from the measure in the context of assessment information obtained by other means

An ability to select outcome measures

An ability to draw on knowledge that a single measure of outcome will fail to capture the complexities of the young person functioning, and that these complexities can be assessed by:	
	measures focusing on the young person's functioning drawn from different perspectives (e.g. child, parent, teacher, therapist)
	measures using different technologies such as global ratings, specific symptom ratings and frequency of behaviour counts
	measures assessing different domains of functioning (e.g. home and school functioning)
	measures that assess different symptom domains (e.g. affect, cognition and behaviour)
An ability to select measures that are designed to detect changes in the aspects of functioning that are the targets of the intervention	
An ability to draw on knowledge that pre- and post-intervention measures are a more rigorous test of improvement than the use of retrospective ratings post-therapy.	

Ability to use diaries

Knowledge

An ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which systematic recording is used to help identify the function of a specific behaviour by analysing its antecedents and consequences (i.e. what leads up to the behaviour, and what happens after the behaviour has occurred)
--

Ability to integrate systematic 'diary recordings' into assessment and intervention

An ability to explain and demonstrate the use of parent/carer-completed frequency charts (designed to record the frequency of child behaviours)
An ability to explain and demonstrate the use of parent/carer-completed behavioural diaries (designed to record problematic child behaviours and their antecedents and consequences).
An ability to explain the function of structured charts to young people, and to help them use charts to monitor their own behaviour.
An ability to gauge when young people and parents/carers would benefit from a graduated approach to systematic monitoring
where indicated, an ability initially to introduce a simpler recording system which is made more complex at a later stage (e.g. starting with a simple frequency count before recording the behaviour along with its antecedents and consequences)
An ability to review completed frequency charts and behaviour diaries with parents/carers and young people in order to:
find out the parent/carer and/or young person's interpretation of the data
find out how easy it was for the parent/carer or young person to record information
motivate them to carry out any further data collection
An ability to use diary and chart information to help assess the frequency of problems, degree of distress caused, antecedents and patterns of behaviour and reinforcement

Ability to make use of 'Star Charts'

An ability to draw on knowledge that the function of star charts is to draw attention to desirable child behaviours
An ability to draw on knowledge of learning theory in order to design charts which offer positive reinforcement
An ability to introduce and explain the use of star charts
An ability to review completed star charts with parents/carers and children in order to:
identify the presence and extent of desirable child behaviours and the parent/carer's ability to reinforce them
identify whether the parent/carer had any difficulties using star charts
motivate them to use further charts and other forms of positive reinforcement

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- Carr, A. (2006). *The Handbook of Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology: A Contextual Approach* (Second edition). London: Routledge.
- Ogles, B.M., & Lunnen, K. M. (1996). Assessing outcome in practice. *Journal of Mental Health*, 5, 3546.
- Roth, A., & Fonagy, P. (2004). *What works for whom? A critical review of psychotherapy research*. 2nd edition New York: Guilford Press.

Ability to make use of supervision

An ability to hold in mind that a primary purpose of supervision and learning is to protect the client and support the counsellor, thereby enhancing the quality of the counselling clients receive

An ability to work collaboratively with the supervisor

An ability to work with the supervisor in order to generate an explicit agreement about the parameters of supervision (e.g. setting an agenda, being clear about the respective roles of supervisor and supervisee, the goals of supervision and any contracts which specify these factors)

An ability to help the supervisor be aware of your current state of competence and training needs

An ability to present an honest and open account of therapeutic work undertaken

An ability to discuss therapeutic work with the supervisor as an active and engaged participant, without becoming passive or avoidant, or defensive or aggressive

An ability to present therapeutic material to the supervisor in a focussed manner, selecting the most important and relevant material

Capacity for self-appraisal and reflection

An ability to reflect on the supervisor's feedback, to apply these reflections in future work and to evaluate their impact and effectiveness

An ability for the counsellor to be open and realistic about their capabilities and to share this self-appraisal with the supervisor

An ability to use feedback from the supervisor in order further to develop the capacity for accurate self-appraisal and reflection

An ability to use supervision to expand awareness of the counsellor's psychological responses to the client and of the client's subjective perceptions

Capacity for active learning

An ability to act on suggestions regarding relevant reading made by the supervisor, and to incorporate this material into counselling practice

An ability to take the initiative in relation to learning, by identifying relevant papers, or books, based on (but independent of) supervisor suggestions, and to incorporate this material into counselling practice

Capacity to use supervision to reflect on developing personal and professional roles

An ability to use supervision to discuss the personal impact of the work, especially where this reflection is relevant to maintaining the likely effectiveness of counselling work

An ability to use supervision to reflect on the impact of counselling work in relation to professional development

Capacity to reflect on supervision quality

An ability to reflect on the quality of supervision as a whole, and (in accordance with national and professional guidelines) to seek advice from others where:

there is concern that supervision is below an acceptable standard

where the supervisor's recommendations deviate from acceptable practice

where the supervisor's actions breach national and professional guidance (e.g. abuses of power and/or attempts to create dual (sexual) relationships)

Ability to conduct a collaborative assessment

Assessment is a collaborative process, that is revisited throughout the counselling work, in which the young person is given an opportunity to describe their difficulties, as well as their strengths and resources, such that the focus and goals for the therapeutic work can be established and agreed

Knowledge of the assessment process

An ability to draw on knowledge that the overall aim of the assessment process is to identify ways, in collaboration with the young person, in which they can improve the quality of their life

An ability to draw on knowledge of the fundamental principles that guide a counselling assessment:

establishing assessment as a mutual, collaborative process

an emphasis on the young person as a 'whole person'

an emphasis on the young person's strengths and resources as well as areas of pathology and deficit

helping the young person gain a perspective on their situation in order to make informed choices about the changes they wish to make in their lives

identifying any areas of existing and potential risk in order to inform risk management planning

aiming to identify the most suitable intervention, if any, which may include onward referral

An ability to draw on knowledge of local and national assessment procedures including those which can be completed by several different agencies working together (e.g. Integrated Assessment Framework (IAF) (Scotland); and Common Assessment Form (CAF) (England); UNOCINI (N. Ireland))

Ability to adapt the assessment to match the abilities and capacities of the young person

An ability to draw on knowledge of human development to appraise the young person's functioning and overall level of understanding

An ability for the counsellor to adapt the language and methods they use to map to the young person's developmental level:

e.g., using non-verbal as well as verbal information gathering methods for instance 'family tree', creating a visual map of areas of personal strengths and difficulties

An ability to make use of interpreters when working with young people who do not speak the same language as the counsellor

Ability to engage the young person in the assessment process

An ability to explain the nature of the assessment process to the young person and the areas that it will cover:
e.g., an ability to explain the relevance of particular areas of the assessment (such as the importance of gathering information about family history)
An ability to convey an interest in understanding the young person, their perspective and worldview
An ability to hold the young person's worldview in mind and to:
apprehend the ways in which the young person characteristically understands themselves and the world around them
convey this understanding through interactions with the young person, in a manner that allows them to correct any misapprehensions
retain an independent perspective and guarding against over-identification with the young person's worldview
An ability to respond non-judgmentally to information which emerges during the assessment
An ability to discuss confidentiality and its limits (e.g. the potential for child protection information which emerges to be shared with other agencies)

Ability to undertake a generic assessment

An ability to listen to the young person's concerns in a manner which is non-judgemental, supportive and sensitive, and which conveys a comfortable attitude when the young person describes their experience
An ability to help the young person articulate their goals for the therapy, and to gauge the degree of goal-agreement in the aims of the young person and the counsellor
An ability to help the young person discuss their sense of the likely benefit of counselling
An ability for the counsellor to reflect on whether or not counselling is likely to be of benefit to the young person
An ability to help the young person articulate any concerns that are unclear or abstract
An ability to help the young person identify, or select, a therapeutic focus
An ability to gain an overview of the young person's current life situation, specific stressors and social support
An ability to elicit information regarding psychological problems, any given diagnosis, past history, present life situation, attitude about and motivation for therapy
An ability to assess the young person's coping mechanisms, stress tolerance, and level of functioning
An ability to gauge the extent to which the young person can think about themselves psychologically (e.g. their capacity to reflect on their circumstances or to be reasonably objective about themselves)
An ability to gauge the young person's motivation for a psychological intervention
An ability to discuss treatment options with the young person, making sure that they are aware of the options available to them, and helping them consider which of these options they wish to follow
An ability to identify when counselling might not be appropriate or the best option, and to discuss this with the young person: e.g.,
the young person's difficulties are not primarily psychological
the young person indicates that they do not wish to consider psychological issues

the young person indicates a clear preference for an alternative approach to their problems

An ability to make appropriate use of a range of responses in line with the young person's developmental level

An ability to assess the young person's difficulties

An ability to identify and explore with the young person the difficulties that are causing concern to them, including:

problems in their family

low self-confidence/self-worth

anger

bereavement

difficulties at school

difficulties in peer relationships/friendships (including bullying)

difficulties with sexuality and intimate relationships

anxiety

difficulties in managing mood

low mood and negative life outlook (including self-harm and suicidal ideation)

difficulties arising from risky behaviours (misuse of alcohol and drugs, sexual behaviour, behaviours leading to involvement with police etc.)

An ability to help the young person identify and elaborate the details of problems that concern them, including:

the settings in which the issues manifest (including the people who are present, and specific details of places and times)

the situations or events which occur immediately before this response and which appear to trigger it

the consequences that immediately follow this response (such as the reactions of parents)

An ability to help the young person to identify and discuss their ideas about how the presenting issue(s) developed

An ability to help the young person reflect, identify, and elaborate on the situations in which they manage effectively, and any distinctive differences between these situations and ones in which they do not

An ability to help the young person consider whether significant others share their perception of their issues, or whether they take a different view, and to consider the implications of any differences

An ability to assess the impact of the issues on basic daily functioning (e.g. eating, sleeping)

An ability to assess the broader impact of these issues including:

the degree of social impairment

the degree of distress for the young person

the degree of disruption to others

An ability to draw on knowledge of specific mental health presentations (e.g., phobias, post-traumatic stress, depression)

An ability to discuss the use of drugs and alcohol with the young person
An ability to discuss any current/past contact with legal services with the young person
An ability to track those areas that are emotionally significant for the young person
An ability to understand the significance of events and experiences as perceived by the young person and how these might be contributing to current difficulties

An ability to assess the young person's current functioning

An ability to assess the young person's current levels of functioning:
Personal
Interpersonal
Social
Academic

An ability to assess with the young person their strengths, resources and abilities

An ability to identify and explore with the young person their strengths and abilities (e.g. personal, familial, social, hobbies/interests, values/beliefs):
An ability to identify and discuss with the young person their levels of resilience: e.g.,
by identifying times when things have worked well
by discussing their previous attempts to address their difficulties
An ability to help the young person describe their hopes for their life and their future, and the ideas they have about how these could be achieved

Integrating information from relevant others

An ability to integrate information from family, school as well as other sources of particular relevance to the young person
--

An ability to develop a collaborative understanding of the young person's life story

An ability to obtain information on the young person's understanding of their development, including strengths and interests as well as any delayed or unexpected developmental processes.
An ability to obtain details about all the members of the young person's family (e.g. by drawing a family tree)
An ability to help the young person identify areas of support within the family relationships

An ability to help the young person identify stressors in the family that may have contributed to the onset or maintenance of difficulties (e.g. parental mental ill health, parental substance misuse, family separation, bereavement, communication difficulties, conflict/domestic violence)

An ability to obtain details about the nature and quality of family relationships, extended family, social networks and social support

An ability to obtain details of the strengths and interests shown by the young person within the school system as well as any difficulties

An ability to develop a collaborative understanding of the young person's social and cultural context

An ability to draw on knowledge of the incidence and prevalence of mental health concerns across different cultures/ethnicities/social classes

An ability to ask about potential protective factors in the young person's social and cultural context: e.g. social support, proximity to extended family, or access to community resources

An ability to ask about any potential stresses in the young person's physical or social environment: e.g. overcrowding, poor housing, neighbourhood harassment, problems with gangs

An ability to ask about the young person's membership of peer groups: e.g. friendship groups, clubs

An ability to draw on knowledge of the young person's cultural, racial and religious background when carrying out an assessment of the young person's behaviours, beliefs, and the potential impact of this perspective on their views of problems

An ability to understand the cultural influences on gender roles, parenting practices, and family values

An ability to identify the limits of one's own cultural understanding

An ability for the counsellor to reflect on, and monitor, their own experiences of the assessment process

An ability for the counsellor to monitor their personal feelings, or professional judgements, about the young person and/or the process of counselling in order to determine:

the extent to which these may have been influenced by their own personal issues or life history

the ways in which these reactions /responses might be impacting on the assessment process (both positively and negatively)

An ability for the counsellor to ensure that their own feelings or judgements do not interfere with their ability to respond to the young person in an open, accepting and empathic manner

Ability to make use of tools and measures at assessment and throughout the counselling process

An ability to identify suitable outcome and process measures and tools for the counselling assessment, and for the on-going counselling work	
An ability to draw on knowledge that the use of process and outcome tools is most effective when they are integrated into the therapeutic process	
An ability to draw on knowledge of the purpose, function and benefits of a range of outcome tools and/or measures for working with young people:	
	to provide young people with a means of articulating experiences that they might find otherwise difficult to express
	to give counsellors an initial, and on-going, indication of how the young person is experiencing their world and their levels of distress
	to act as a prompt for the counsellor and young person to explore important areas of the young person's life and experiences
	to give an indication of the extent to which the counselling is helping, and therefore whether it should be continued or an alternative approach should be considered
	to provide data for external commissioners and agencies on the effectiveness of the counselling work
An ability to draw on knowledge that regular collection of outcome and process data (e.g., at every session) is necessary to ensure that data is available for all clients	
An ability to draw on knowledge of the purpose and function of tools and measures that focus on therapy process (e.g., Session Rating Scale (SRS)):	
	to provide the young person with a means of articulating their experience of aspects of the therapeutic work and relationship that they may otherwise find difficult
	to provide the counsellor with a means of understanding how the young person experiences the therapeutic relationship and work, and what they might do to make this more helpful for the young person
	to act as a prompt for conversations about how to improve the quality of the therapeutic work and relationship for the young person
An ability to draw on knowledge of 'contraindications' for using assessment tools and measures: e.g.:	
	when the young person clearly expresses a strong wish not to complete them
	when there are indications that the young person may find them upsetting to complete
	when the young person's concerns are of such urgency that it would be more appropriate to defer completion of a measure
An ability to help the young person understand the intended aim and focus of any assessment tools (e.g. by offering a clear description and rationale for their use that is tailored to their age and cognitive capacities)	
An ability to support the young person in completing the measure or tool in the prescribed manner	
An ability to interpret scores by drawing on knowledge of the psychometric principles underlying the relevant assessment tools and measures	
An ability to engage the young person in the collaborative use of measures and tools in the assessment process (e.g. through discussion of scores and their meaning)	
An ability to discuss with the young person any changes or re-focusing that might be appropriate in the therapeutic work as a result of their responses on outcome or process measures	

Ability to conduct a risk assessment

This level of risk assessment will not necessarily be conducted at all times, but all counsellors will need to know the necessary skills for risk assessment

Knowledge of policies and legislation

An ability to draw on knowledge of national and local strategies standards, policies and procedures regarding clinical risk assessment and risk management

An ability to draw on knowledge of national and local child protection standards, policies and procedures

An ability to draw on knowledge of the principles of the relevant mental health Acts (e.g. Mental Health and Treatment Act/ Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act)

An ability to draw on knowledge of local policies on confidentiality and information sharing

An ability to draw on knowledge of the statutory responsibilities of adults (e.g. parents, carers, school staff) to keep young people safe from harm

Knowledge of risks

An ability to draw on knowledge of the different forms of clinical risk routinely assessed for in clinical practice, including:

risk of harm to self:

suicide risk

self-harm without apparent suicidal intent e.g.: deliberate self-poisoning or self-injury, self-harm related to eating disorders or substance abuse, impulsive behaviour, sexual behaviour that puts the individual at risk,

risk of self-neglect

risk of harm to others (e.g. violent, and challenging behaviour)

risk of harm from others (e.g. domestic violence, abuse, neglect, parental mental ill health/ substance misuse)

An ability to draw on knowledge of the main risk factors for self-harm, self-neglect, harm to others, and harm from others

Knowledge of the risk assessment and management process

An ability to draw on knowledge that the aim of the risk assessment is to improve the quality of life of the young person, and prevents or minimises the risk of negative events or harm.

An ability to draw on knowledge of the benefit of a structured approach to risk assessment which combines clinical and actuarial information

An ability to draw on knowledge of the limitations of assessing risk and making predictions in relation to an individual because of the multiple and interrelated factors underlying their behaviour

An ability to draw on knowledge that the assessment of risk may need to be an ongoing process.

An ability to draw on knowledge of the main risk factors for self-harm, self-neglect, harm to others and harm from others

An ability to draw on knowledge that there are different types of risk factor which can be:

static and unchangeable historical events (e.g. a history of child abuse)

dynamic but chronic, with only slow change over time (e.g. social deprivation)

dynamic and acute, and can change rapidly (e.g. access to lethal weapons, or conflict with parents and/or peers)

An ability to draw on knowledge that risk assessment tools may be a useful part of risk assessment

An ability to draw on knowledge of the benefits, limitations and training requirements of risk assessment tools or measures

An ability to draw on knowledge that there are different stages and forms of risk assessment which may include:

identification of risks during an initial assessment

an in-depth structured risk assessment which includes a systematic evaluation of known risk factors

a highly specialised structured assessment of risk of violence to others (usually conducted in a forensic service, and which may include the use of specialised risk assessment tools)

An ability to draw on knowledge that the different stages and forms of risk assessment can be carried out by different clinicians and agencies

An ability to identify when a risk assessment indicates that onward referral is necessary

Ability to seek advice and supervision

An ability to recognise the limits of one's own expertise and to seek advice from appropriate individuals e.g.:

supervisors and/or other members of the clinical team

specialist forensic teams (e.g. where there are threat of serious violence)

specialist self-harm teams

Caldicott Guardian (regarding complex confidentiality issues)

social workers (e.g. where there are possible child protection issues)

Skills in Risk Assessment and Management

Assessment of risk

In the context of conducting a comprehensive assessment, an ability to carry out an in-depth structured risk assessment which combines information from clinical interviews, measures, observations and other agencies, comprising:

the development of a good working alliance with the young person

a systematic assessment of the demographic, psychological, social and historical factors known to be risk factors for self-harm, self-neglect, harm to others and harm from others

an ability to identify the young person's view of their experience, including their view of possible trigger factors to harmful events, and ideas about interventions or changes in their environment that might be helpful in reducing the risk of future harm

an ability to consider how the young person's developmental stage may affect their perception, understanding and behaviours in relation to risk

an ability to identify the extent to which the adults involved in the young person's care (e.g. parents/carers, school staff) are able to assess and manage risks)

an ability to identify when family/carers need to be involved in building a comprehensive risk assessment, in collaboration with the young person wherever possible

An ability to integrate risk assessment with knowledge of the individual young person and their social context, including their strengths and any resilience factors

An ability to conduct a risk assessment to gauge:

how likely it is that a harmful/negative event will occur

the types of harmful/negative events

how soon a harmful/negative event is expected to occur

how severe the outcome will be if the harmful/negative event does occur

the likely mediating impact of any protective factors

Ability to develop a risk management plan

An ability to develop a risk formulation which estimates the risk of harm by:

identifying factors which are likely to increase risk (including predisposing, perpetuating and precipitating factors)

identifying factors which are likely to decrease risk (i.e. protective factors)

An ability to create a risk management plan, in collaboration with the young person, which:

identifies the actions to be taken by the young person and relevant services, should there be an acute increase in risk factors and/or the family perceives itself to be in crisis

explicitly weighs up the potential benefits and harms of choosing one action or intervention over another

details interventions or supports that reduce or eliminate risk factors for the harmful/negative event(s)

details interventions or supports that encourage the young person's strengths and resilience factors

manages any tensions arising from restrictions the plan places on the lifestyle of the young person or family

An ability to identify when it is appropriate to employ interventions that involve an element of risk (usually because the potential positive benefits outweigh the risk)

An ability to use the risk formulation to judge whether and when to schedule a reassessment with the young person

An ability to communicate the risk management plan to the young person, parents/carers, and other professionals, including information on the potential benefits and risks of a decision, and the reasons for a particular plan

Equality and Diversity

An ability to consider whether any assumptions or stereotypes about particular demographic groups (rather than knowledge of researched risk factors) lead to underestimation (e.g., under-estimating the risk of domestic violence in middle class families) or over-estimation of actual risk (e.g. over-estimating concerns about ability to parent amongst traveller communities)

Interagency working

An ability to collaborate with all potentially relevant agencies when undertaking a risk assessment

An ability to ensure that there is timely communication with all agencies involved in the case, both verbally and in writing

An ability to communicate the risk management plan to other agencies including information on the potential benefits and risks of a decision, and the reasons for a particular plan

An ability to maintain a clear and detailed record of assessments and of decisions regarding plans for managing risk, in line with local protocols for recording clinical information

an ability to identify and record the actions individuals within each agency will be undertaking

An ability to escalate concerns (within own or other agencies) when the implementation of the risk management plan is problematic

An ability to refer to, and to work with, more specialised agencies (e.g. inpatient units or forensic teams) in line with local referral protocols

Knowledge of the basic assumptions and principles of humanistic counselling

Knowledge of humanistic philosophy and principles that inform the counselling approach

An ability to draw on knowledge that humanistic models assume:	
	the centrality of 'experiencing' (i.e., thinking, perceiving, sensing, remembering, and feeling, along with the inherent meanings and actions associated with these modes of experience)
	that people can be helped through the establishment of respectful, genuine, closely-attuned relationships
	that people have a capacity for self-determination and self-direction, and that this can be an important part of the therapeutic change process
	that the diversity of human experience is to be valued and treated equally
	that people are motivated towards self-maintenance, psychological growth and development, and hence the realisation of their potential
An ability to draw on knowledge that human experience can be viewed from multiple perspectives (e.g., intrapersonal, interpersonal, contextual, cultural and spiritual) and that, as a consequence, the sum of a person's experience is greater than each of these parts	

Knowledge of humanistic theories of human growth and development and the capacity for psychological wellbeing

An ability to draw on knowledge that healthy functioning involves experiencing in an integrated, holistic manner (and hence the focus of counselling is on the person as a whole, including particular symptoms and specific areas of functioning)	
An ability to draw on knowledge that psychological growth will be influenced by, and takes place within, a social and cultural context: for example, family, school, community	
An ability to draw on knowledge that people have a capacity to sense whether an action contributes to growth:	
	that emotional experiencing plays a key role in this capacity
An ability to draw on knowledge that people's functioning and behaviour are guided by their subjective reality	
An ability to draw on knowledge that people have the potential to develop a reflexive stance, allowing them to:	
	expand self-awareness
	reconstrue experiences
	make changes to their ways of functioning and living

Knowledge of the humanistic conditions for, and goals of, counselling change

An ability to draw on knowledge that responding empathically to clients may increase their self-understanding and reduce their sense of isolation and alienation
An ability to draw on knowledge that offering a warm, accepting and non-judgemental attitude to clients may reduce their defensiveness and increase their awareness of their experiencing
An ability to draw on knowledge that being genuine and open with clients may increase their levels of trust and also models psychological health
An ability to draw on knowledge that change is more likely when:
counsellor and client are able to communicate and relate to each other
mutual understanding exists between counsellor and client
the client and counsellor collaborate to decide the course and content of the counselling

Knowledge of the processes by which humanistic counselling may help young people experience greater psychological wellbeing

An ability for the counsellor to draw on knowledge that helping young people to explore their experiences, emotions and problems in an empathic, accepting and trusting relationship may help them:
feel less ashamed
get things 'off their chest' and experience emotional relief
feel less isolated
feel less worried about their problems
feel less confused or overwhelmed by their problems
An ability to draw on knowledge that such responses may lead to positive outcomes for clients such as:
finding more effective ways of dealing with their problems
having greater confidence in themselves
experiencing their world in a more integrated and holistic manner
learning to open up more about their feelings and experiences, and hence developing better relationships with others in their lives
improved self-acceptance and self-confidence

Ability to initiate therapeutic relationships

Ability to explain and demonstrate the rationale for humanistic approaches to therapy

An ability to provide a concise and coherent description of the therapy for the young person:
an ability to communicate the central belief in the young person's capacity for growth and problem-resolution, albeit within the limits of their developmental stage, and social and cultural context
An ability for the counsellor to convey the position they intend to adopt in relation to the young person:
to develop a collaborative relationship with the young person, viewing them as an active partner in the therapeutic work
to hold an accepting attitude
to be genuine and open
An ability for the counsellor to describe what they hope will emerge from the process of therapy
An ability to help young people discuss their expectations of the therapy and help them to identify outcomes which are achievable
An ability to clarify the responsibilities of the counsellor and those of the young person in the therapeutic relationship
An ability to help the young person understand that therapy may increase contact with emotions and that at times this may be experienced as upsetting

**Ability to conduct a collaborative assessment* and *Ability to conduct a risk assessment* are activities that should be integrated into the process of initiating therapeutic relationships and are described in detail in the Assessment competences in the final section of the Generic Therapeutic Competences

Ability to establish and agree a therapeutic focus/goals

Ability to draw on the assessment to develop and agree a shared focus/goals for the counselling

An ability to draw on knowledge from the assessment process to develop and agree with the young person a shared focus and/or goals for the counselling
An ability to draw on knowledge from the assessment process to develop a plan for how the therapeutic work will proceed (e.g., any specific programmes/interventions that may be used)
An ability to maintain a balance between retaining a clear focus for the therapeutic work and being flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the young person
An ability to draw on knowledge that a clear and explicit focus for the therapeutic work may not always be possible or helpful for the young person
An ability to include evaluation procedures in the plan for counselling, for example:
an ability to record the young person's identified goals for the counselling, with the aim of evaluating whether they have been met by review dates or at the end of the counselling
An ability to renegotiate goals as therapy progresses

Ability to promote informed choice

An ability to provide the young person with information on the various options for counselling, including information on its likely effectiveness
An ability to discuss with the young person any possible negative effects of the counselling (e.g., becoming distressed when talking about difficult topics and how this could be managed in counselling)
An ability to seek the young person's views on the provision of counselling
An ability to gauge the young person's motivation and preference for particular intervention options
An ability to discuss whether the young person anticipates any difficulties with engaging with counselling, including their attendance
An ability to reach agreement on an appropriate plan for counselling
An ability to discuss the length of the initial period of counselling and to set a review date

Ability to identify when a counselling intervention is not required and/or not appropriate

An ability to discuss with the young person when counselling is not required at the present time and to discuss the reasons for this with the young person, for example:
when the process of assessment has (in itself) enabled the young person to resolve the presenting problem
An ability to recognise and discuss with the young person that their needs might be best met by other services (e.g., school nurse, specialist CAMHS)
An ability to recognise when the young person and/or their family/carers require further, more specialist, assessment in order to determine the most appropriate intervention (e.g., assessment for family work, educational psychology, cognitive assessment)

Ability to develop a contract for the therapeutic work

An ability to explicitly agree, with the young person, the boundaries for the therapeutic work, including:
confidentiality and the limits to confidentiality
how any records of the work will be kept
how the young person could make a complaint if required
the timing and number of counselling sessions
procedures that will be followed if the young person does not attend counselling
any payment involved and procedures for payment

Ability to maintain and develop therapeutic relationships

Ability to experience and communicate empathy

An ability to be sensitive to the young person's frame of reference, emotions and experiencing:	
an ability to monitor (on a moment-to-moment basis) the degree to which the young person is in psychological contact with the counsellor, for example:	
	whether the young person's communications are reasonably coordinated with and/or match the counsellor's verbal and non-verbal behaviour
an ability to use appropriate empathic responses to adjust work for young people who show evidence of being out of psychological contact, for example:	
	by sensitively reflecting the young person's words, with the aim of helping them to articulate aspects of their subjective experience
An ability to maintain a consistent empathic attitude:	
	to be responsive to the young person's verbal and non-verbal communication
	to sense the emotions and perceptions of the young person as if they were the counsellor's own (while maintaining an awareness of the counsellor's own experience)
An ability to sense and understand those feelings and perceptions of which the young person is aware, as well as those that have not yet entered the young person's awareness	
An ability to understand the potential significance of body language (i.e., facial expression, bodily posture) as indices of the young person's subjective experience	
An ability to understand the potential significance of paralanguage (i.e., tone of voice, intonation, diction, cadence) as indices of the young person's subjective experience	
An ability to identify inconsistencies between the young person's verbal and non-verbal behaviour	
An ability to empathise equally with all aspects of the young person's experience, even where these aspects are contradictory	
An ability to communicate empathically with the young person in a way that conveys an accurate understanding of their emotions and perceptions, for example:	
	making empathic responses that the young person can use constructively
	accurately summarising and paraphrasing the young person's discourse
	accurately reflecting the young person's feelings back to them
	using metaphor where appropriate
An ability for the counsellor to check that their perceptions of the young person's inner world are consistent with the young person's own experience, and to revise them in light of the young person's feedback	

Ability to experience and to communicate a fundamentally accepting attitude to young people

An ability to value the way that a young person experiences their world, regardless of their behaviour, attitudes and beliefs
An ability to hold an attitude of acceptance towards the young person and to demonstrate this through a welcoming and non-judgemental attitude
An ability to communicate genuine warmth and acceptance to the young person both verbally and non-verbally
An ability to respond to failures of unconditional positive regard (e.g., if the counsellor experiences rejecting and judgemental feelings towards the young person) through self-reflection and the use of supervision
An ability for the counsellor to reflect on their own values and the ways in which these might influence their work with young people

Ability to maintain authenticity in the counselling relationship

An ability for the counsellor to be aware of their own experience in an accepting and non-evaluative manner throughout the process of building a relationship with the young person
An ability to maintain consistency between what is experienced by the counsellor and the way in which this is portrayed in the counselling relationship
An ability to be fully engaged in the counselling relationship
An ability to relate to the young person in a non-defensive and open manner
A capacity to tolerate and work with strong emotions
An ability to relate to the young person in a spontaneous way, where appropriate
An ability to relate to the young person without adopting an incongruent professional 'façade'
An ability to demonstrate consistency between verbal and non-verbal communication
An ability to be aware of emotional, bodily and cognitive reactions to the young person and to use these therapeutically
An ability to self-disclose and communicate experiences of the young person to the young person, especially where this is:
relevant to the young person's concerns, and
recurrent, persistent or striking, and
likely to facilitate, rather than impede, the young person's counselling process

Ability to conclude counselling relationships

Ability to conclude the counselling relationship

An ability to work collaboratively with young people to identify when they may be ready to end counselling, for example:	
	where young people feel that they have come sufficiently close to achieving their goals in counselling
	where counselling does not appear to be helpful for the young person
	where an alternative intervention is considered more appropriate to help the young person achieve their goals
	where it becomes apparent that the young person is primarily wanting to attend counselling for an ulterior motive, for example to miss lessons
An ability to initiate the conclusion of the counselling relationship, where:	
	the young person feels that they are ready to end
	the counselling has come to the end of a fixed period of delivery
	the counsellor feels certain that the work is no longer helpful for the young person
An ability to negotiate with the young person how counselling will end and what information relating to the counselling will need to be communicated to other parties	
An ability to review with the young person their progress over the course of counselling	
An ability to help young people make effective use of the ending phase of counselling:	
	to help young people review their prospects for the future, taking into account their current social context and relationships
	to assist young people to express thoughts and feelings not previously addressed in counselling
	to help young people express feelings connected to endings, such as sadness and loss, or concerns about dependency, or a sense of achievement and fulfilment
	to develop with the young person strategies for change and plans for action following the end of counselling
Where the young person does not have choice about the timing of the ending, an ability to discuss this with them in a way which supports their progress	
An ability to explore with the young person options for future counselling interventions and other sources of support should the need arise	
An ability to identify when it may be appropriate to offer a young person a follow-up ('booster') session, for example:	
	as a means of providing continued support to the young person
	as an opportunity to maintain positive change
An ability to communicate to a young person the purpose, nature and context of a follow-up session and to agree consensual goals	
An ability to collaboratively negotiate and agree the next steps in any contact, including timing, venue, and method of reminding client	

Specific competences for humanistic counselling with young people

Approaches to working with, and making sense of, emotions

Ability to help young people to access and express emotions

An ability to identify the ways in which young people manage and process their emotions, including the ability to recognise when they are finding it difficult to access these	
An ability to help young people experience feelings which may be out of current awareness, for example:	
	by helping young people focus their attention inwards in order to become more aware of their feelings
	by helping young people find ways of describing emotions which seem difficult to access
	by listening empathically for feelings that are implicit and not yet fully in awareness
	by focusing the young person's attention on bodily sensations
An ability to help the young person differentiate between feelings that are appropriate to (and hence useful for) dealing with a current situation and those that are less helpful to them, for example:	
	because they are emotional responses relating to previous experiences rather than the present context
	because they are reactions to other, more fundamental, emotions

Ability to help young people articulate emotions

An ability to help the young person find appropriate words to describe their emotions
An ability to help the young person verbalise the key concerns, meanings and memories which emerge out of emotional arousal
An ability to help the young person identify and verbalise the wishes, needs, behaviours and goals associated with feelings and emotions
An ability to suggest imagery and metaphor to help the young person become more aware of, and to articulate the meaning of, their experiences

Ability to help young people reflect on emotions and develop new understandings

An ability to help young people explore and evaluate new perspectives on their experiences in order for them to:	
	develop alternative ways of understanding their experiences
	revise their views of themselves
	develop new narratives relating to themselves and their world
An ability to help the young person reflect on any new meanings that emerge:	
	to check the accuracy of meanings against experience
	to assess the implications of the new meanings

to re-examine behaviour and where appropriate consider alternative forms of action

An ability to help young people evaluate new perspectives in terms of their social context, personal values and goals in life

An ability to help young people adapt central assumptions about self, others and relationships in the light of experience

Ability to help young people make sense of experiences that are confusing and distressing

An ability to recognise and to help young people reflect on reactions that they experience as problematic and/or incongruent (e.g., when they over- or under-react to a situation, or react in ways which they describe as being out of character):

an ability to help the young person describe both their emotional reactions and the external situation, in ways that encourage the young person:

to identify how they were feeling before they encountered the situation

to re-imagine the situation

to identify the moment when the reaction was triggered

to explore their reaction to the situation

to make links between their reactions and the way they construed the situation

to develop new ways of understanding the situation and their responses to it

Using creative methods and resources

Ability to use creative methods and resources to help young people express, reflect upon, and make sense of their experiences

An ability to judge when the use of creative and symbolic methods may be helpful, for example:

when a young person may not have highly developed verbal skills

when a young person seems 'stuck' and unable to elaborate

when a young person seems disengaged

when a young person is becoming newly aware of an aspect of experience which they are struggling to express verbally

when a young person demonstrates a preference for visual/symbolic rather than verbal forms of communication

An ability to draw on knowledge of different creative methods and resources that may be appropriate for use with young people: for example, art, play materials, sand tray, life story, therapeutic games

An ability to draw on knowledge of the advantages of creative methods and resources, for example:

in providing a medium for the communication of pre-verbal experience

because of the association with play, as providing a natural form of communication for young people
as providing a working distance or reflective space between a young person and their problems
as providing opportunities for young people to project their inner experience into the perceptual field they share with the counsellor

An ability to draw on knowledge of the uses of creative methods and resources, for example:

to help young people access and explore feelings, thoughts and beliefs
to help externalise internal conflict between aspects of the self
to explore the relationship between the young person and significant others
to explore problematic situations in the past, present or future
to explore alternative scenarios

An ability to collaborate with young people to select creative methods and resources that are consistent with their needs and abilities

An ability to help young people describe and explore their experience when engaging with creative/symbolic methods

An ability to adopt a non-intrusive and non-interpretative stance when helping a young person explore the personal meanings which emerge in creative work

An ability to help a young person make sense of the meanings and experiences that emerge from using creative methods and resources

Use of *Life Story**

An ability to draw on knowledge that a young person's sense of themselves can be expressed as a personal narrative or life story

An ability to use creative resources to help young people represent their life story (i.e., symbolic materials representing chronology and key milestones in their growth and development)

An ability to help young people describe and reflect upon their life story

An ability to use creative resources to help young people represent difficult experiences/events within their life story

An ability to help young people describe and reflect upon difficult experiences/events within their life story, together with accompanying emotional reactions

An ability to help young people integrate difficult experiences/events into their life story

An ability to help young people project their life story into the future in order to review hopes and aspirations

*This method is not recommended for young people with post-traumatic stress disorder. The competences for working with trauma are set out in the CAMHS competence framework

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/CORE/child-adolescent.php#Map>

Metacompetences for humanistic counselling with young people

Working with the whole person

An ability, when working with clients, to maintain a holistic perspective (recognising the integrated nature of intrapersonal, interpersonal, contextual, and cultural aspects of the person)
An ability to take fully into account the client's cultural and social context in order to empathise with their frame of reference
An ability to consider developmental issues when appraising a client's capacity to tolerate emotion

Capacity to balance therapeutic tasks

An ability to balance an understanding of a client's individual experiences and characteristics with knowledge of normative development
An ability to balance the use of standardised therapeutic methods with practices that are tailored to the client's individual preferences and needs
An ability to maintain a balance between directive and non-directive dimensions of the therapeutic process, as appropriate to the individual client
An ability to balance any tensions between the maintenance of the therapeutic relationship and the achievement of therapeutic tasks
An ability to balance client autonomy with the need to attend to issues of client safety and risk
An ability to hold responsibility for the therapeutic frame while sharing power appropriately with the client
An ability for the counsellor to adopt an accepting and non-judgemental attitude towards the client while acknowledging their feelings for, and reactions to, the client
An ability to maintain a balance between prizing the client's experience and being willing to challenge, and not condone, problematic behaviours
An ability to attend to both process and content in the therapeutic relationship
An ability to balance facilitating the client's emotional arousal with the need for understanding and meaning-making in the therapeutic relationship
An ability to balance levels of support and challenge in the therapeutic relationship
An ability to judge when it is appropriate to introduce creative methods and resources that encourage active emotional expression
An ability to maintain a client-centred relational stance when implementing additional therapeutic interventions
An ability to balance hope for positive outcomes from counselling with a realistic appraisal of the likely impact of the intervention, when discussing therapeutic work with clients and other key stakeholders
An ability to hold in mind and to monitor the client's emotional needs and capacities when developing and collaborating in therapeutic tasks

Integrating the counsellor's experience into the therapeutic relationship

An ability for the counsellor to make use of 'metacommunication' (discussing how client and counsellor are communicating with each other), and a capacity to:

judge when metacommunication might be helpful to the client (e.g., relational difficulties/misunderstandings)

convey the intention behind the counsellor's communication

explore the impact of the counsellor's communication on the client

An ability for the counsellor to recognise their own contribution to the construction of meaning in the therapeutic relationship

Working with complex relational issues

An ability for the counsellor to maintain a sense of their own separate reality and experience while maintaining an awareness of the ways in which clients may draw them into particular patterns of relating

An ability to relate to the client on multiple levels:

in the 'real' relationship, constructed through the meeting of two individuals

in the therapeutic alliance, where counsellor and client work collaboratively

in the 'transference' relationship, in terms of the client's patterns of relating to others

Working in the organisational context

An ability to balance the interests of different stakeholders within the organisational context when making professional judgements about therapeutic work, while keeping the interests of the client central

Ability to work within a school context

Partnership working

An ability to draw on knowledge that the provision of a non-stigmatising and accessible form of early intervention for psychological difficulties is underpinned by working in partnership with schools

An ability to draw on knowledge that effective partnership working involves an understanding of the school system e.g.:

the ethos, culture and core business of the school and how this relates to the counselling service

the governing and organisational structure of the school

the roles and responsibilities of teaching and support staff

assessment systems used by the school, including statutory tests and examinations

the ways in which young people are grouped (e.g.: year groups, tutor groups)

critical transition periods during young people's school careers (e.g. key stage 3 to 4)

the framework for external inspection (e.g. Ofsted, Estyn, HMI) and the impact this has on the school community

the school's policies and procedures (e.g. attendance, punctuality, rewards, uniform, student voice)

the school's approach to discipline and its policy with regard to exclusion

An ability to draw on knowledge of the impact the school context will have on the counselling service, for instance with regard to:

access and referral to the service

the management of client confidentiality

the scheduling of appointments

the physical environment in which counselling takes place

the level of privacy provided by the service, i.e.

that teachers and peers may inevitably be aware a young person is attending counselling

the clients' understanding of the purpose of counselling, i.e.

that the way the counselling service is promoted in the school will affect young people's perceptions

client autonomy

An ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which the provision of counselling services may impact on the school system, for example by:

increasing levels of emotional literacy

promoting talking about problems as a means of resolving them

promoting greater awareness of mental health issues

reducing the stigma associated with psychological problems

promoting a more holistic view of pupil development and well-being

An ability to understand that duty of care to young people lies ultimately with the school, and that counsellors therefore have a responsibility to communicate with school managers particularly where issues of risk and safeguarding arise

An ability to draw on knowledge of national, local authority and school policies, procedures and initiatives relevant to school-based counselling (e.g. health and safety, pastoral care, bullying, behaviour management, child protection etc.)

An ability to follow relevant policies/procedures as these apply to any activity in which the counsellor is involved

An ability to contribute effectively to meetings, as necessary, including the provision of written reports

Ability to communicate across the school context

An ability to draw on knowledge of the importance of effective communication across the school context

An ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with a number of different stakeholder groups, (including school management, school staff, other professionals, young people, parents/carers and school governors), for example:

to clarify the role of school-based counselling services

to describe the potential benefits of school-based counselling

to explain the codes of practice that apply to counselling

to publicise and encourage people to make use of services

to explain how a service operates and how to access it

An ability to draw on knowledge of the principles of confidentiality and consent in order to manage the tension between the need to share information and the need for client confidentiality (see Core Competences 'Knowledge of, and ability to work with, issues of confidentiality, consent and capacity')

An ability to communicate to school management any general trends in behaviour noticed by the school based counselling service (e.g. a rise in self-harm or bullying)

An ability to manage and negotiate out-of-session contact with clients around the school site, e.g.:

balancing the client's need for privacy with the counsellor's need to be a visible presence within the school

Ability to work collaboratively across the school context

An ability to work collaboratively with school management to establish a clear understanding of the purpose of counselling, its codes of practice and role within the school
An ability to work with school management to identify a Link Teacher for the counselling service
An ability to liaise regularly with the Link Teacher to establish referral protocols and priorities and provide an overview of service progress
An ability to manage an appointment system that has due regard for the demands of the school curriculum
An ability to negotiate service delivery in an appropriate setting on the school site and with appropriate accommodation
An ability to negotiate with school staff the accessibility of the service outside of school hours, and for those who are on the school roll but are not attending school
An ability to evaluate the counselling service using a variety of forms of systematic feedback and develop service delivery accordingly (see Generic Therapeutic Competences 'Ability to make use of measures')
An ability to provide reports to school management on the usage made of the counselling service
An ability to work with school staff to develop procedures for managing missed appointments

Ability to promote emotional health in schools

Developing a framework for emotional health promotion in schools

An ability to draw on knowledge of key organisational issues for the effective delivery of emotional health promotion programmes in schools:
an 'emotionally aware' and supportive school
a commitment to promoting emotional health
support from the head/senior teacher and class teacher support
availability of sufficient dedicated programme time within the timetable
a good fit with other school emotional health initiatives (e.g. complimentary to other programmes, not too many initiatives)
the availability of appropriate programme leaders (e.g. led by health professionals, teachers, counsellors or external agencies) who have sufficient time to deliver the programme
An ability to draw on knowledge of a range of school-based emotional health promotion programmes in school (e.g. peer-support programmes, circle time, anger-management groups)
An ability to draw on knowledge of available evidence-based promotion programmes
An ability to draw on knowledge of the training and support required to deliver the programmes effectively
An ability to draw on knowledge of which programmes are appropriate for children of different ages, levels of ability, and their primary target (e.g. depression or anxiety)
An ability to draw on knowledge of the likely benefits and limitations of different methods of delivery (e.g. universal v. targeted delivery)

Establishing a context and a rationale for emotional health promotion

An ability to explain to educational staff, children and young people and their families the rationale for emotional health promotion (e.g. to develop skills to maintain psychological health and promote resilience) and the nature of the programme (i.e. that this is an educational intervention rather than a therapy)
An ability to clarify the likely improvements and benefits that would be expected from the programme
An ability to clarify what will be unlikely to improve as a result of the programme
An ability provide a rationale for the underlying theoretical model of the programme and how the areas of learning/skills taught relate to this
An ability to clarify the role of the programme leader (that they are a facilitator rather than a therapist)

Giving specific information relevant to the intervention

An ability to give accurate information regarding the evidence base for specific promotion programmes
An ability to give information about the programme content and length of specific programmes

An ability to advise those delivering the programme about the purpose of specific tasks/activities and how these relate to the underlying theoretical model and aims of the programme

An ability to advise on how specific tasks can best be delivered/adapted to the needs of the young people

Decision making regarding the appropriateness of different programmes

An ability to advise on the best model of emotional health promotion delivery within the resources available to the school (e.g. whether universal or targeted)

An ability to advise on appropriate specific programmes for the school, giving due consideration to:

the primary aims the school wishes to achieve

available time within the timetable

training and availability of programme leaders

availability of required resources (e.g. workbooks)

appropriate supervision and support

An ability to identify children and young people within the school who are experiencing significant psychological problems and who may require additional therapeutic interventions:

an ability to refer to other services (e.g. counselling, specialist CAMHS) where this is indicated and appropriate

Ability to advise on the effective delivery of prevention programmes

An ability to highlight the core tasks and activities for each session

An ability to advise on how these might best be adapted and delivered to individual groups/classes

An ability to advise on how to deal with challenges to delivery of the programme, e.g.:

specific problems (e.g. students not understanding or engaging with the programme)

individual students (e.g. challenging behaviour or specific learning problems)

specific issues within the school that will impact upon the effective delivery of the programme (e.g. timetabling issues or teacher involvement/absence)

Ability to monitor the effectiveness of prevention programmes

An ability to advise on the importance of using pre- and post- measures to evaluate the programme

An ability to advise on suitable age-appropriate measures

An ability to interpret the outcomes of any assessments of effectiveness

An ability to offer written and verbal feedback regarding the effectiveness of the programme to relevant members of the school

Ability to work within a voluntary and community (“third”) sector context

Competences in this section refer to the knowledge and skills required when working in the context of a voluntary and community sector counselling organisation

Knowledge of the organisational structure

An ability to draw on knowledge of the organisation’s governance and management structures, including its:

- values, principles, mission and purpose
- principal funders
- strategic and business plans
- trustees and their legal and financial responsibilities
- management/organisational structure

Knowledge of the organisation’s operational context and the scope of its work

An ability to draw on knowledge of the organisation’s operational context, including:

- young people’s referral routes into the service
- cross-referral protocols with other agencies
- any limits to the counselling relationship or the scope of work undertaken as a consequence of the operational context
- alternative appropriate services and interventions that may be relevant to the young person’s identified needs

Knowledge and implementation of policies and procedures

An ability to draw on knowledge of the organisation’s policies and procedures, and a capacity to put these into practice, including:

- staff policies
- policies governing the delivery of the counselling service, such as confidentiality and management of personal data, child protection/safeguarding
- policies for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the services offered by the organisation
- systems for collecting and responding to service user feedback
- the distinction between, and different functions of, line management and clinical supervision

An ability consistently to complete statistical and other records identified by the organisation as part of its audit and governance structure

Collaborative working

An ability to work collaboratively with colleagues within the organisation, including a capacity:

to understand the roles, responsibilities and expertise of other staff members

to contribute constructively to professional meetings and professional development and training events

Ability to use additional therapeutic interventions

Humanistic counselling with young people includes being open to the use of therapeutic practices from additional modalities (e.g., CBT), where they may be helpful to the young person concerned and are adopted in an informed, integrated and collaborative way. The *ability to use self-help materials for a range of problems* and the *ability to use applied relaxation* are illustrative of the kinds of practices that humanistic counsellors might draw on, and are indicative only.

Ability to use self-help materials for a range of problems

Establishing a framework for using self-help materials

An ability to identify when it is appropriate for self-help materials to be employed:
as a stand-alone intervention, without counsellor guidance
as a form of guided self-help, with focused support from a practitioner
An ability to identify when it is appropriate to integrate guided self-help into an ongoing counselling relationship
An ability to ensure that self-help materials used with young people are matched to their cognitive and affective development
An ability to draw on knowledge that self-help materials are not usually appropriate for young children
An ability to maintain a clear distinction between the role of a facilitator of guided self-help and the more extensive role of a therapist or case manager

Establishing a context and a rationale for the self-help model

An ability to help recipients of self-help (young people and their families/carers) understand that the main purpose of the intervention is to focus on, and facilitate, the use of self-help material(s)
An ability to identify appropriate and specific goals and desired outcomes for the self-help intervention with the young person and their family/carers
An ability to provide a rationale for guided self-help in an encouraging and realistic manner
An ability to establish a context for the intervention, through clear explanation of the role of the practitioner
An ability to ensure that the young person understands the nature and timing of the schedule of any contacts
An ability to convey the client-led, collaborative nature of a self-help intervention

Giving specific information relevant to the intervention

An ability to impart accurate information about the problems on which self-help materials are focused (e.g., the nature, cause and frequency of a presenting problem)

An ability to give information regarding the likely benefits of self-help interventions (i.e., based on best available evidence of effectiveness)

Decision making regarding the appropriateness of self-help

An ability to agree on the suitability of a self-help intervention for the young person and their family/carers

An ability to collaboratively negotiate and agree the next steps in any contact, including organisational arrangements

An ability to identify young people whose problems lie outside the scope of a self-help intervention (i.e., when alternative interventions are required):

an ability to refer to another part of the service or to other agencies where this is indicated and appropriate

Ability to use applied relaxation

Engagement

An ability to explain the rationale for applied relaxation to the young person, specifically:
the use of this technique to break into vicious circles of physiological arousal (i.e., where individuals react to signs of anxiety by becoming more anxious, a sequence of events which (if repeated) rapidly escalates anxiety)
the benefit of learning to apply relaxation techniques in a range of contexts
the importance of undertaking practice outside sessions in order to gain most benefit

Intervention

An ability to help the young person increase their awareness of early signs of anxiety reactions by completing a record of anxiety episodes
An ability to teach young people progressive relaxation techniques, specifically (and in the following order):
tension and release
release only
cue-controlled relaxation
differential relaxation of different parts of the body while engaged in various activities and while moving
rapid relaxation
An ability to help the young person apply relaxation techniques in anxiety-provoking situations (i.e., to conduct exposure*)
An ability to help the young person maintain and apply their relaxation skills

* 'exposure' refers to a range of cognitive and behavioural techniques that aim to help clients learn to manage (rather than avoid) fear and anxiety cued by both situational and interoceptive (somatic) stimuli. Relevant competences can be found in the CBT competence framework (http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/CORE/CBT_Framework.htm)