

Unit 3, Assignment 2

Ethical Framework & Counselling Skills

2 Know how an ethical framework relates to the use of counselling skills

2.1 Describe how an ethical framework applies to the use of counselling skills

2.2 Outline the competencies that are required to use counselling skills within an ethical framework

Students should complete an essay in which they describe how an ethical framework applies to the use of counselling skills. They should also outline the competencies that are required to use counselling skills within an ethical framework.

Word count: 500 minimum.

The most common ethical framework referred to in the U.K. is the BACP (The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy). BACP provides a framework for its members and registrants to abide by within their practice and touches upon different aspects of counselling including: ethics, values, principles, personal qualities, good practice, professional standards, respect, building a relationship, breaks and endings, accountability and candour, confidentiality, working with colleagues and teams, supervision, training and education, and research. (BACP, 2018). Other institutions which employ counsellors will also provide their own ethical frameworks which inform the counsellor's use of counselling skills; these will be very similar to the BACP's ethical framework. Due to the comprehensive nature of ethical frameworks, it is inevitable that they will inform the application of counselling skills within a helping relationship.

An ethical framework applies to the use of counselling through its comprehensive nature: the application of counselling skills, for instance, will be informed by those 'personal moral qualities' (BACP, 2018) which also pervade through an individual's professional capability. Within the personal moral qualities, BACP lists thirteen qualities which it recommends its members should aspire to: candour, care, courage, diligence, empathy, fairness, humility, identity, integrity, resilience, respect, sincerity and wisdom. Of these named competencies, empathy is integral to the three core counselling skills proposed by Carl Rogers: congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard. With these three skills in mind - fairness, humility, integrity and respect all resonate with those core conditions which form the basis of counselling training.

The BACP outlines some core principles which relate to ethical duties as a counsellor. These include: being trustworthy, respecting autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice and self-respect. Being trust-worthy is fundamental to the application of counselling skills because developing trusting relationships is integral to a successful counselling dynamic. This quality also links to congruence and genuineness which evoke co-operation from the client in order to develop the aforementioned trustworthiness. Respecting a client's autonomy is also fundamental to establishing a more egalitarian relationship - empowering the client to guide the sessions and challenging a more dictating relationship. Beneficence is integral to the application of counselling skills because without a dedication to a client's wellbeing, the counselling process would be futile.

BACP also lists fundamental values which its members must share. Those include points such as: respecting human rights, alleviating symptoms of distress, enhancing wellbeing, improving quality of relationships and increasing personal resilience (BACP, 2018). Resilience - which is a word used several times within the ethical framework - is fundamental to providing a quality counselling service. If a counsellor is not resilient enough to contend with the emotional challenges inherent to the counselling profession, their professional performance and application of counselling skills will be overshadowed by an inability to work objectively.

In order to ensure that counsellors are applying counselling skills effectively and achieving positive outcomes, the BACP's Ethical Framework also requires its members to continue professional development and learn new skills - whilst also being professionally reviewed in supervision with other colleagues and supervisors.

References

BACP, July 2018, *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions*, Accessed at: <https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions/>, Accessed on: 17/08/18.