

## **Appendix 3: Person Specification Criteria for Primary Care Counsellors**

### **(also on the enclosed CD)**

#### **Background**

This protocol has been put together by The Counselling and Psychotherapy Forum for Primary Care after much consultation with training organisations, counsellors, supervisors and service providers.

It is intended to provide a framework for all parties to adhere to in the lead up to statutory registration and to be nationally adopted as the “acceptable standard”.

For **employers** and **service managers** it will provide clear guidance of the qualities, training and expertise required by counsellors working within primary care.

For **students/trainees and trained counsellors** it provides a framework of training that you need to achieve for competency to work in primary care.

This document should be read and used in conjunction with the **Minimum Training Standards Protocol**, also produced by The Counselling and Psychotherapy Forum for Primary Care.

#### **Definition**

A counsellor in primary care here refers to the setting of the work, not the initial training of the therapist. We recognise that counsellors in primary care come from a wide diversity and richness of backgrounds and do not have a homogenous initial training.

What makes a well-trained counsellor in primary care stand out is that he or she will have fulfilled the person specification criteria.

## **Person Specification Protocol for Counsellors in Primary Care**

#### **Aim**

To define the training, placement, personal therapy, service and supervision standards for a primary care counsellor.

This document is relevant for:

- NHS Commissioning Managers/Human Resources
- NHS Counselling Service Managers
- Trainers providing courses for those seeking employment in the NHS
- Counsellors considering employment in the NHS

Implementation of the recommendations in this document will result in quality counselling provision in the NHS and fulfil clinical governance requirements.

#### **Initial Generic Counselling Training**

- 450 hours:
- Core Theoretical Model/s

- Skills Training

This level of counselling training needs to be acceptable to the relevant professional bodies and will also lead to accreditation/registration with BACP/CPC.

It is suggested that training courses, which prepare people for work in the NHS include:

- Assessment (including mental health and risk management)
- Ethical Frameworks for Professional Practice
- General legal issues
- Working with diversity
- 40 hours minimum:  
Personal Development (this means individual personal therapy)
- 100 hours minimum:  
Managed and Supervised Clinical Placement

### **Specialist Counselling Training**

In addition to the above, those seeking employment within the NHS need to include in their Continuing Professional Development (CPD):

- NHS Structure and Policy
- Clinical Governance
- NHS Multi-disciplinary working
- Knowledge of mental health referral pathways and procedures
- Psychotropic Medication
- Focussed, evidence based practice
- Time limited therapy
- Audit, evaluation and research
- Notes/Confidentiality and the Law

This may be acquired through taught CPD modules and/or clinical experience, validated by critical reflection and professional portfolio developments.

## **Student and Post-Qualification Placement Guidance**

### **Placements**

Guidelines for Students and Post-Qualification Placements are available from the professional bodies. These require management, mentoring and supervision. The student would expect a negotiated placement.

### **Professional Counselling Service Standards**

- Mentoring – for students or newly qualified practitioners
- Induction - for newly appointed practitioners
- Appropriate management of the service and the practitioners
- Clinical Counselling Supervision – an ethical requirement of all professional counselling bodies
- Quality Assurance - evidence of audits, evaluation and research based practice

### **Counselling Supervisor Requirements**

- **Post Graduate Qualification in counselling supervision**
- Knowledge of NHS structures/policies and counselling practice

- Meets Clinical Governance requirements

### **Counselling Manager Requirements**

A Counselling Practitioner with knowledge of:

- NHS structures/policies
- A professional counselling perspective
- Management expertise
- Knowledge of audit, evaluation, research, training and supervision

## Appendix 5: The 1995 Course Proposal

### **Core module 1 Working within a multi-disciplinary team in the NHS:**

- Knowledge:** Counsellors need to know and keep up to date with the rapidly changing structures and funding of the Health Service, to understand how Primary care fits with Secondary care, and with provision for mental health and mental illness. They need to understand the medical model. They need to know how to create appropriate structures for referral and confidentiality.  
They need to learn how to work in a different way and manage waiting lists for counselling, if necessary, in a setting where medical staff expects to respond immediately to all requests for service.  
A developed knowledge of elements of effective teamwork is also necessary.
- Skills:** Counsellors need skills, which are seldom explicitly taught on counselling courses to contribute to effective teamwork. This includes assertiveness skills to ensure clarity of communication, and negotiating and co-working skills to enhance the co-ordination of service to patients.
- Awareness:** An understanding of the dynamics of groups and teams, both conscious and unconscious can prepare the counsellor to contribute to formal or informal consultancy to team members.

### **Core module 2 Models of Health and Illness:**

- Knowledge:** Counsellors in Primary care need an up to date basic knowledge about psychopharmacology, and of mental illness (6, 7, 8) to work collaboratively with the medical team. They also need to know about specific psycho-social implications of diseases commonly managed in primary care, and have information about resources to extend that knowledge as clients come forward with less common diseases. Particular topics such as eating disorders, and sexuality are important.
- Skills:** Counsellors need to extend their skills and awareness of health counselling and lifestyle counselling approaches, (9) and to consider family, couple, and group work options for responding to patients with new, chronic or terminal diagnoses, with chronic pain, and so on.
- Awareness:** They need to review their assumptions about health and illness. In particular, they need to develop their understanding of familial and cultural assumptions and trans-generational patterns of illness, and how other cultures and sub cultures might construe symptoms differently. (10)  
They also need to increase their awareness of their attitudes to medical colleagues.

### **Core module 3 Models of Time Effective Therapy:**

All counsellors in Primary care are being pressed to work preferentially within a brief therapy model where a norm is 4-6 sessions, and the routine range is between single sessions and a maximum of 10 in any one series. Yet few counsellors have training in brief therapy methods.

- Knowledge:** Counsellors need a structured opportunity to review the brief therapy models, and assess how far the assumptions fit with their own. They

need to explore the bases in cognitive-behavioural ideas, and “solution focus” or “possibility focus” paradigms, and develop their own models of time effective work which fit with and extend the way they practice, and match the setting.

**Skills:** Most time effective therapies are present and future focused rather than past focused, and rely on proposing homework tasks, giving compliments to clients to reinforce their awareness of their strengths, use of imagery and imagination to identify desired goals, and so on. Whichever model the counsellor chooses to apply they need to develop the skills associated with that model.

**Awareness:** Counsellors need to explore the possibilities and limits of new paradigms, and where they feel comfortable or not in applying them. It is important to give time to integrating the new knowledge and skills with the established working methods, which serve them well already as experienced practitioners.

#### **Core module 4: Personal and professional development.**

The Counselling in Primary care package invited students to reflect on their Personal and Professional self care in the personal and professional development element. An aim for the future was to offer this material also to form the basis of a module for a staff team to study together

The module had 6 components:

- Self-assessment materials
- Integrating Theory and Method
- Confidentiality, Power, and appropriate contracts
- Practice issues: Caseload/ workload management
- Professional/personal review
- Supervision
- Attending to Transcultural issues

#### **Example of self-assessment material - caring for the Carer: Strategies for self-care:**

It was and is apparent that many practitioners in the health care system suffer from stress. They resort to inappropriate strategies to continue work under highly stressful circumstances, and are at risk of premature burnout. Counsellors are not exempt from internal and external pressures, and need to be taught strategies to anticipate and manage their own stress where possible. The BACP ethical framework now puts this as an essential element of ethical practice.

The syllabus for this included

- The development of an understanding of the Structure, organisational context
- and culture of the workplace, and the impact on the individual practitioner of
- role conflict and role strain;
- An exploration of the practitioner’s motivation to do the work;
- An exploration of their capacity to focus and set appropriate boundaries;
- Identification of their own network for personal support, and whether they feel
- they have an appropriate balance of satisfactions in their lives.
- An awareness of their personal style and how well it fits with those of
- dominant others in the team.
- Learning to monitor their energy levels and developing understanding of

- positive stress management.
- Use of supervision to sustain well being.

## Appendix 6: Useful website addresses

<a href="http://www.bacp.co.uk">www.bacp.co.uk</a>	British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
<a href="http://www.bcp.org.uk">www.bcp.org.uk</a>	British Psychoanalytic Council
<a href="http://www.bps.org.uk">www.bps.org.uk</a>	British Psychological Psychology
<a href="http://www.coreims.co.uk">www.coreims.co.uk</a>	CORE - Clinical Outcomes for Routine Evaluation
<a href="http://www.cpc-online.co.uk">www.cpc-online.co.uk</a>	Counsellors and Psychotherapists in Primary Care
<a href="http://www.dh.gov.uk">www.dh.gov.uk</a>	Organising and Delivering Psychological Therapies
<a href="http://www.dh.gov.uk/nsf/mental">www.dh.gov.uk/nsf/mental</a>	National Service Framework for mental health, Modern Standards and Service Models.
<a href="http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HumanResourcesAndTraining/ModernisingPay/AgendaForChange/fs/en">www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HumanResourcesAndTraining/ModernisingPay/AgendaForChange/fs/en</a>	Agenda for Change
<a href="http://www.doh.gov.uk">www.doh.gov.uk</a>	Department of Health/NHS Site
<a href="http://www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/mentalhealth.htm">www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/mentalhealth.htm</a>	Adult Mental Health Services: Final Report by the Workforce Action Team, Special Report. (Appendix C, Page 27).
<a href="mailto:www.info@cpcab.co.uk">www.info@cpcab.co.uk</a> CPCAB	Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body
<a href="http://www.ento.co.uk">www.ento.co.uk</a> ENTO	ENTO
<a href="http://www.fhcp.org.uk">www.fhcp.org.uk</a> FHCP	Faculty for Healthcare Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP)
<a href="http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk">www.healthcarecommission.org.uk</a>	The Healthcare Commission
<a href="http://www.hpc-uk.org">www.hpc-uk.org</a>	Health Professions Council
<a href="http://www.nice.org.uk">www.nice.org.uk</a>	National Institute for Clinical Excellence
<a href="http://www.parn.org.uk">www.parn.org.uk</a>	Professional Associations Research Network
<a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk">www.qaa.ac.uk</a>	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher

	Education
<a href="http://www.qca.org.uk">www.qca.org.uk</a>	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
<a href="http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk">www.psychotherapy.org.uk</a>	United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy
<a href="http://www.scmh.org.uk">www.scmh.org.uk</a>	Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health
<a href="http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/files/mh_layard.pdf">www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/files/mh_layard.pdf</a>	Layard, Lord R Report Mental health: Britain's biggest social problem?
<a href="http://www.wise.nhs.uk/sites/workforce/retaininganddevelopingstaff/Document%20Library151/1/Allied%20Health%20Professions/Clinical%20Psychologists,%20Counsellors%20and%20Psychotherapists.pdf">http://www.wise.nhs.uk/sites/workforce/retaininganddevelopingstaff/Document%20Library151/1/Allied%20Health%20Professions/Clinical%20Psychologists,%20Counsellors%20and%20Psychotherapists.pdf</a>	National Profiles for Clinical Psychologists, Psychotherapists and Counsellors – also on the CD, Appendix 7