

CACHE Level 2

Certificate in Counselling Skills

HELPING RELATIONSHIP

CORE COUNSELLING SKILLS

PERSON-CENTRED THEORY

OBJECTIVES

PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY

Workbook 1

Boundaries that need to be taken into account when starting a new helping relationship

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 3.

In a helping relationship, the 'helper' uses a range of skills to listen to and support an individual who is seeking assistance (the helpee).

When a helper starts a new helping relationship it is essential that they set boundaries with the helpee. A boundary is an 'unofficial rule about what should not be done' or 'limits that define acceptable behaviour'. In a helping relationship, boundaries allow the helper to identify:

- what they are able to provide in the relationship
- what the helpee wants to get from the relationship

By identifying these things, both the helper and helpee will know what to expect from the relationship.

It is important that boundaries are set at the beginning of a new helping relationship to ensure that the helpee fully understands what will happen during sessions and knows what to expect from the helper. Clear boundaries help to build a trusting helper/helpee relationship.

A range of boundaries must be taken into account when starting a new helping relationship. These are explored below.

Confidentiality

An important aspect of building trust in a helping relationship is confidentiality, which allows helpees to feel they can talk openly and honestly and reflect on what they are discussing.

The helper should explain before the first session begins that whatever is said during the sessions will be kept confidential and that the helpee's identity will not be revealed to anyone.

Additionally, the helper must explain instances in which they would break confidentiality. These include when they believe the helpee is at risk of self-harm or at risk of harming others.

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Time

Helpers should explain how long each session will last and that each session will start and end promptly. This:

- helps establish and maintain trust
- provides the helpee with consistency
- gives the helpee the security of knowing that their sessions will not be cut short
- avoids confusion – if a session runs over, the helpee may think that all sessions can do so
- allows the helpee to decide what they would like to cover in the session
- sets the helpee's expectations as to what can be covered in a session
- makes it clear that fees stay the same even if the helpee arrives late

Appropriate setting

The setting, or location, of a helping session is not in itself a boundary, however, a suitable setting will enable the helper to establish boundaries. For example, a helping session that takes part in a public place like a café could compromise confidentiality, which in turn will impact the helpee's trust in the helper. An appropriate setting will make the helpee feel safe and secure.

Record keeping

It is important that the helper explains to the helpee what will happen to any notes that are taken during sessions. For example:

- the notes will be kept in a secure place; the helper should explain the location and security measures in place, i.e. in a locked cabinet or an encrypted file on a computer
- access to notes must adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

Did you know?



A helper must ask a helpee for permission to discuss anything that is said during sessions with their supervisor or another helper.

Agreeing objectives for a new helping relationship

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 4.

An objective is 'a thing aimed at or sought; a goal', and in a helping relationship, an objective is something the helpee wants to achieve or gain from working with the helper. For example, they may want to find a solution to a situation that is worrying them, or achieve a goal such as losing weight or finding a new job.

The helper will explore the situation with the helpee and provide support to come up with a solution.

It is important that objectives are agreed at the beginning of a new helping relationship so that the helpee feels the sessions are structured and that the time spent with the helper is used constructively and will help them reach a goal.

How to agree objectives

The helper will use a range of core counselling skills (see pages 5-6), including active listening and silence to support the helpee to set objectives and goals. To agree objectives, the following steps can be followed:

1. Finding out why the helpee wants a helping relationship

At the beginning of a new helping relationship, the helper will ask the helpee open questions, such as 'What would you like to gain from these sessions?' and 'What brought you here today?' This will:

- help them develop an understanding of why the helpee has sought a helping relationship
- give them an understanding of what the helpee is hoping to achieve in the sessions
- aid them in asking specific follow-up and reflective questions and providing appropriate support

2. Asking clarifying questions

The helper may ask the helpee additional questions to ensure that they understand what the helpee would like to focus on and achieve through the helping sessions and to assist the helpee to engage in deep self-reflection so that they can hone in on the true issue or issues they wish to address.



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3. Work with the helpee to develop objectives

A good way of doing this is to make objectives SMART, which means they are:

- **Specific** – i.e. specifically state what the objective is. For example, if the helpee would like to find work, an objective could be to write their CV. To meet the specific criteria, the helper could ask the helpee a range of questions, including:
 - Why do you want to achieve this objective now?
 - How are you going to achieve this objective?
- **Measurable** – i.e. a means of knowing when an objective has been achieved. This element allows the helpee to see when an objective has been reached, which helps to motivate them. For example, the CV goal will be met when the helpee has added all of the information, spell checked it and had a friend or family member read through it for them.
- **Attainable** – i.e. if an objective is too big, there is a larger possibility that the helper may not achieve it. Objectives should present a challenge to the helpee, but not be so large that the helpee will fail and have their confidence knocked. For example, if the helpee wanted to write their CV and find a job in a week, it is likely they won't achieve their objective. If, however, they wanted to finish their CV and apply for a job in a week, that may be more achievable.
- **Relevant** – i.e. the helpee should take into account their personal circumstances and set their objectives accordingly. For example, if they don't have a computer or Internet connection at home, they should factor in the extra time it will take to get to a library where they can access the tools they need to create the CV.
- **Time-bound** – i.e. the helpee should set a time limit for their objective; this gives them something to work towards and also helps with the measurable element of a SMART goal.

Once the helper has worked with the helpee to ensure their objective is SMART, they should make sure the helpee is comfortable with what they've agreed. It is then a good idea to summarise what has been discussed in the session and talk about what will happen in the next session. For example, the helper may ask to see a draft of the helpee's CV in the next session.

Did you know?



It is not the helper's job to set objectives and goals for the helpee, rather they will suggest and agree them with the helpee.

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Knowledge Activity 2: Think of something in your life you would like to achieve or change. Explain what it is below and explain how you will make your objective SMART.



Lined writing area for the activity. The area contains horizontal lines for writing and a large, faint, diagonal watermark that reads "SAMPLE".



COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THEORY

USEFUL STRATEGIES

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