

PT39 Enable the client to determine their therapeutic focus in humanistic therapy

OVERVIEW

This standard is about working collaboratively with the client within a relational framework to support them in determining their therapeutic direction. Humanistic therapists place a strong emphasis on the client's right to self-determination. Humanistic practice does not insist that the client works towards goals in a structured way. Therapists facilitate the emergence of therapeutic aims from the client's current experience in the here-and-now. This standard includes working with a client's feelings of a lack of direction or their preference not to have goals, yet to remain within the emerging process.

This standard describes therapeutic practice adopted successfully in mental health and wellbeing interventions for adults, based on the philosophical tenets of the humanistic tradition and incorporating a range of approaches from a humanistic value base. (See reference in the additional information section on page 3.) To apply this standard, practitioners also need to take account of the multiple problems and complex co-morbidities that individual clients may bring to therapy.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that they are receiving supervision and that their practice reflects up to date information and policies. This standard should be understood in the context of the Digest of National Occupational Standards for Psychological Therapies.

Version No 1

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will need to know and understand:

Case Conceptualisation

1. methods of developing a case conceptualisation

Conditions for therapeutic change

2. the rationale for responding empathically to the client and being warm, open, non-judgmental, genuine and transparent

3. how to employ the specific methodology, key concepts and relevant components of the model being used
4. how to maintain therapeutic conditions
5. psychological conditions that make change more likely

Relational processes in the immediate therapeutic relationship

6. the mechanism and nature of shared meanings co-constructed by therapist and client
7. how the client's explicit, manifest communications may contain an implicit, latent meaning
8. the ways in which aspects of past events can be re-experienced in the present

The actualising tendency and process

9. the role of actualisation in human growth and health
10. the ways in which internal processes out of the client's awareness can undermine, distort or block the actualising tendency
11. how the actualising tendency is expressed in the practice of humanistic therapy
12. the concept of symptoms as a signal for integrating experience and growth
13. the concept of symptoms as indicators of the actualisation process

Mental health and wellbeing

14. the range and severity of mental health difficulties and their presentation
15. the factors associated with the emergence, development and maintenance of mental health difficulties
16. humanistic models of mental distress
17. the ways in which mental health difficulties can impact on personal and interpersonal functioning
18. models of a fully functioning individual

Human growth and development and the origins of psychological difficulties

19. models of change, health and wellbeing
20. the impact of conflicts within the individual
21. the impact of social context on psychological growth and development
22. the role that emotional experiencing has in an individual's awareness of how an action contributes to growth
23. the role of relationship in the development of self-experience
24. the mechanisms and effects of internal processes out of the client's awareness in the development of self-experience
25. the role of internal processes out of the client's awareness in difficulties in self-experience
26. how thinking, feeling and behaviour are determined by an individual's subjective reality
27. the impact on psychological development of empathic attunement and acceptance and the extent of its absence during the formative years
28. the mechanism and effects of internalisation of the values, beliefs and attitudes of others
29. the development and benefits of the capacity to reflect on inner processes and experiences

30. the development of the capacity to balance inner and outer realities
31. the multiple perspectives from which human experience can be viewed

Principles of humanistic therapy

32. philosophy and principles that inform humanistic therapy
33. humanistic theories of therapeutic process
34. approaches to psychological therapy that have grown out of the humanistic psychology movement
35. experiential methods of learning
36. non-humanistic approaches that influence humanistic therapy

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

You must be able to do the following:

1. understand the ways in which the client views their main presenting concerns by:
 1. empathically attuning to everything the client brings
 2. understanding the significance of events and experiences as perceived by the client and how these might be contributing to current difficulties
 3. agreeing and sharing a case conceptualisation with the client
2. explore and allow a therapeutic focus to emerge with the client in the early stages of therapy and enable the client to evolve their focus during the course of therapy
3. allow the client's direction for therapy to take precedence over any that the you may prefer as therapist
4. collaborate with the client to clarify their primary intentions for therapy
5. balance the identification of therapeutic focus with the maintenance of a fluid, responsive therapeutic process
6. tolerate your and the client's uncertainty about therapeutic aims
7. enable the client to see their direction more fully by checking with the client as straightforwardly as possible your understanding of who they are and what they are bringing
8. maintain consistency with the therapeutic approach being offered

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This National Occupational Standard was developed by Skills for Health.

This standard is derived from research reported in Roth A D, Hill A and Pilling S (2009) *The competences required to deliver effective Humanistic Psychological Therapies*. Centre for Outcomes Research & Effectiveness (CORE) University College London.

This standard has indicative links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: Core 1 Communication