

PT47 Enable the client in humanistic therapy to make sense of their experiences

OVERVIEW

This standard shows how the therapist and client explore experiences that the client considers problematic, including experiences that the client and therapist might avoid. It shows how, through processing the experiences, the client may be helped to move forward from them. The standard includes the creation of a dialogue in which the client can explore with the therapist the issues that they wish to address to increase their choices in ways of being and relating. Ultimately the client is helped to establish ways of engaging with their experiences in therapy - and consequently life's experiences - more effectively.

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 4.) To apply this standard, therapists 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:

Human growth and development and the origins of psychological difficulties

1. models of change, health and wellbeing
2. the impact of conflicts within the person
3. the impact of social context on psychological growth and development
4. the role that emotional experiencing has in an individual's awareness of how an action contributes to growth
5. the role of relationship in the development of self-experience

6. the mechanisms and effects of internal processes out of the client's awareness in the development of self-experience
7. the role of internal processes out of the client's awareness in difficulties in self-experience
8. how thinking, feeling and behaviour are determined by an individual's subjective reality
9. the impact on psychological development of empathic attunement and acceptance and the extent of its absence during the formative years
10. the mechanism and effects of internalisation of the values, beliefs and attitudes of others
11. the development and benefits of the capacity to reflect on inner processes and experiences
12. the development of the capacity to balance inner and outer realities
13. multiple perspectives from which human experience can be viewed

Conditions for therapeutic change

14. the rationale for responding empathically to the client and being warm, open, non-judgmental, genuine and transparent
15. how to maintain therapeutic conditions
16. the psychological conditions that make change more likely
17. how to employ the specific methodology, key concepts and relevant components of the model being used

Principles of humanistic therapy

18. philosophy and principles that inform humanistic therapeutic approaches
19. humanistic theories of therapeutic process
20. approaches to psychological therapy that have grown out of the humanistic psychology movement
21. experiential methods of learning
22. non-humanistic approaches that influence humanistic therapy

Mental health and wellbeing

23. the range and severity of mental health difficulties and their presentation
24. the factors associated with the emergence, development and maintenance of mental health difficulties
25. humanistic models of mental distress
26. the ways in which mental health difficulties can impact on personal and interpersonal functioning
27. models of a fully functioning individual

Relational processes in the immediate therapeutic relationship

28. the mechanism and nature of shared meanings co-constructed by therapist and client
29. how the therapeutic relationship reflects the relationship histories of both the client and the therapist
30. how the explicit and implicit meanings that shape the client's and therapist's perceptions of their world may be experienced within and influence the therapeutic relationship

31. how the client's explicit, manifest communications may contain an implicit, latent meaning
32. ways in which aspects of past events can be re-experienced in the present
33. how the therapist may make use of their immediate emotional and embodied reactions to the client
34. the ways in which the therapist's immediate responses and experiences within the therapeutic relationship can form a basis for communicating empathic understanding and informing exploration of the client's subjectivity

The actualising tendency

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

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

You must be able to do the following:

1. create a dialogue around the client's experiences that:
 1. allows collaboration
 2. allows creative thinking
 3. broadens the area of discovery about the client's inner and outer world
 4. allows the co-creation of new meanings and understandings
 5. protects the client in the risks they wish to take in therapy
2. work collaboratively with the client so that they can:
 1. explore their implicit central assumptions about self, others and the world
 2. adapt central assumptions in the light of experience
3. enable the client to articulate aspects of their experience that they wish to articulate
4. facilitate a dialogue about conflicting and distressing aspects of the client's experience when this is bearable and likely to be beneficial for the client
5. enable the client to explore and evaluate new perspectives on their experiences that allow them to:
 1. make links between their reactions and the meaning they make of situations
 2. experiment with new meanings
 3. develop alternative ways of understanding their experiences
 4. revise their views of themselves
 5. accept themselves
 6. develop new narratives relating to themselves and their world
 7. reflect and make choices on the expression and containment of emotions
 8. develop awareness of the impact of their emotions on others
 9. develop metaphors that fit their experience and their newly-emerging perceptions of it
6. enable the client to reflect on new meanings that emerge, supporting them as

they:

1. check the accuracy of meanings against experience
2. assess the implications of the new meanings
3. re-examine behaviour and consider alternative forms of action
4. recognise that meanings are incomplete and will continue to develop
7. when relevant to the client, work with them to explore their emerging insights into current ways of perceiving, feeling and acting that have been useful, protective and necessary but are now limiting
8. explore with the client the significance of what they do not want to articulate, or talk about
9. allow the client to evaluate new perspectives in terms of their social context, personal values and goals in life
10. support the client in tolerating uncertainty and experience that they may not understand

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