

## **Assessment 2 - Reflective Commentary**

### **Description**

I was paired with Rebecca for this fictitious counselling skills work video via microsoft teams with one observer Ruth. I was the counsellor and Rebecca was the client who constructed a fictitious scenario where she was a man called Mark who worked with his uncle in a building company and has been married for 6 years and got married at a young age. He's now come to the realisation that their marriage is facing some complications and wasn't enjoying his wife's company and preferred to stay with his uncle after work for a few hours before heading home to his wife. Upon arriving home Mark felt as though his wife complained too much about him doing the housework when he wanted to relax after work, making him feel irritated with the way she speaks to him. He feels as though his wife has a negative outlook on everything which influences how he feels - passing on the negative energy to him which affects his mood overall throughout his life. His wife feels as though she wants to have children in the near future however, Mark stated that he does want children with her as he does love her wife and doesn't want a divorce but feels as though their marriage needs to strengthen and improve before they can both think about bringing children into their relationship as it could potentially accumulate more strain and stress on their marriage. Mark expressed that he does try to communicate with his wife on the complications that are arising throughout however, does realise that he could communicate more with her but is finding it rather difficult as he is scared of how she will react when he communicates with her regarding these. He did state that he is not scared of his wife but more scared of creating unnecessary arguments which adds more stress to their marriage and the upset feeling he may endure afterwards when expressing his feelings about what she does that is affecting him. Mark stated that he and his wife hadn't attempted any professional help such as; marriage counselling to support with resolving the difficulties they are facing but, it could be something that they would both consider in the future if there are no improvements. Mark feels as though he and his wife lack having things in common with each other and expressed that if they had more in common they could do things together with his uncle, he says he feels as though he has a few ideas of what could rekindle their relationships but is restricted as he doesn't feel as though he wants to spend time with her with how she's speaking to him and her attitude towards him. He's feeling overwhelmed with his life as he feels as though he's not making enough money as he wants to be earning which is adding stress onto his life and he feels as though maybe he's taking out his feelings on his wife however, he feels as though he can't go to his uncle for advice or guidance as he believes he has a negative view towards women with saying 'they're all the same' and his wife doesn't like him as he has made a few sexist comments towards women when he, his wife and his uncle have been out together previously.

## **Feelings**

Before carrying out the practical assessment I was feeling nervous and anxious towards doing it but, after having a practice run beforehand it made me feel a little more at ease. Throughout the counselling skills video recording I felt as though I was prepared as there were various previous times where we had carried out practice. I felt as though I had feelings of sympathy throughout regarding the scenario provided to me. Once completed and watching the video recording back I felt as though it allowed me to reflect upon my counselling skills and the areas that were good and areas of where improvements could be made for the future. Overall, I felt as though the video recording assessment went well however, I do feel as though there are improvements that can be made.

## **Evaluation**

I think that the things that went well were that I used a good counselling contract in the beginning and made sure the client was comfortable with having an observer in the video call with us, ensuring he was okay with the use of confidentiality, time and knowledge of what ethical guidelines I would be following. Also, I reflected on what Mark said to me to ensure that I understood what he was expressing to me. I also think I used active listening skills to listen to what Mark was saying to me, also implementing relaxed body language, eye contact and sitting squarely. I believe I also made good use of minimal encouragers when Mark was expressing his feelings and concerns to me to ensure Mark knew that I was engaged within the conversation and he could comfortably discuss his concerns to me in a relaxed environment. I also think I made effective use of showing unconditional positive regard and congruence towards Mark throughout the counselling sessions.

However, there are some improvements that I could make for future scenarios in order to improve my counselling skills which include; improving my paraphrasing skills as I feel like I didn't make use of this skill very much throughout the assessment. I also feel like I need to improve on my empathy skills as I feel like I didn't use these much throughout. I also feel as though I could have used a better use of appropriate open ended questions towards the client.

## **Analysis**

I think the things that went well went well due to previous practice in class with various class members and scenarios helped me gain and improve on my counselling skills. I also think things went well from our knowledge gained throughout the counselling classes in university. I think the things that didn't go well occurred because I was nervous before carrying out the assessment. I feel as though I didn't make all effective use of appropriate open ended questions as I felt like I was under pressure. I also feel like I could improve on my paraphrasing skills with more knowledge gained from future

classes as it has always been a weak point of mine. I also feel like I need to improve my empathy skills by challenging myself more in real life and in the practice sessions throughout class. I also need to put myself in others' shoes in order to show empathy towards them and I need to take note of feedback given to me on the practice sessions. Overall, I feel like watching the video recording back allows you to reflect on your counselling skills most as you can see what skills you used and how you used them and also point out your own weaknesses.

### **Conclusion**

I learnt that there are some areas where improvements could be made however, at the same time I have identified areas where I feel I am confident are quite effective throughout the counselling skills sessions. This could have been made a more positive experience if the assessment was carried out face to face on campus and recorded there as due to being over a video call it is hard to reflect upon SOLER (sitting squarely, open position, Leaning in, Eye contact and Relaxed body posture). I feel as though I need to improve on my confidence skills as I feel like I put myself down before practical assessments feeling as though I will not do well throughout them. I also feel like I need to improve my empathy and compassion skills towards the client in order for the counselling session to be more effective and make use of more appropriate open ended questions throughout.

### **Action Plan**

If I had to do the same assessment again I think I would carry out more practice with the people I'm paired with in order to gain a deeper understanding of the scenario. I also feel like when I would practice with them I would record the practice sessions to watch back in order to reflect on my skills in time to attempt to make some improvements in time for the actual assessment as I find watching myself back and reflecting upon the experience is more beneficial than receiving feedback from peers as you can identify your strengths and weaknesses yourself. I feel like I could improve on my counselling skills with practice through my workplace and practice sessions in class with peers. I also feel like you could implement these skills through everyday life with friends and family when they speak to you about their complications and difficulties in life. To make sure I act differently and implement my skills in the future I will concentrate more on implementing them throughout and improving my confidence skills beforehand. I will also focus mainly on improving the skills I find I have weaknesses in but also keep practicing the skills I feel like I am good at.