

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Choose from ONE of the following vignettes of a primary professional role and describe and discuss the counselling skills areas of competence that will be required for the role based on the Counselling Skills areas of competence document.

The professional role I will be discussing is a Wellbeing Officer in a college setting. Wellbeing officers help students with mental health problems and work with the teaching staff to encourage better mental health. They listen to students' problems and aid them to seek help in the college setting and in day-to-day life (Coleg y Cymoedd, 2022). They also help teaching staff when a student is having a crisis (Coleg y Cymoedd, 2022). To become a wellbeing officer in a college environment a level 3 qualification tends to be required (Educators Wales, 2026). To gain this role a lot of colleges will look for the necessary skills required to make sure they can fulfil their role (Educators Wales, 2026).

Within a college wellbeing officer role counselling skills are required, therefore it is recommended to follow the BACP framework. The BACP counselling skills competence framework was developed to help workers who are not trained counsellors however their role requires them to use counselling skills (BACP, 2020). Midwinter and Dickinson (2015) discuss the difference between being a trained counsellor and using counselling skills within your career. The book states that the differences are that a counsellor has a line of ethical frameworks they must follow. This being the ethical framework for counselling professionals by the BACP (BACP, 2018). Whereas workers like a college wellbeing officer have guidelines to follow (Midwinter & Dickinson, 2015). The framework helps workers to be able to work ethically and safely within their role (BACP, 2020). It allows workers to be able to notice

the signs of when an individual needs to open up. Therefore, having the ability to provide a space where the person can talk about their problems, using the necessary skills required. Finally knowing when someone needs to be passed on to a counselling professional (BACP, 2020). BACP (2020) has five areas of competence these being professional context, empathy, skills and techniques, working alliances and personal qualities. In the role of a wellbeing officers all these areas must be applied to ensure their counselling skills do not cross any lines. Counselling skills can be used in many careers like the health care settings and in the education sector (BACP, 2020).

The first area of competence in the framework is Professional context. It is important that while a Wellbeing officer should follow the guidelines to help embed their skills into their role, that they still follow the main rules set out by their employers (BACP, 2020). The framework is guidance to help with their skills and to understand (BACP, 2020). In a college setting there will be a framework they have to follow that's set-in place by the institution. Professional context includes making sure that the employee is working ethically and safely (BACP, 2020). So, in this college setting for a wellbeing officers this would be making sure safeguarding is in place (Welsh Government, 2021). To make sure the student knows anything they disclose is confidential unless they believe the student is at harm and they must pass this information on to a higher level (BACP, 2020). The wellbeing officers must consider if something is too much for their skill level and if so pass them on to someone who has the proper counselling training to help them further (BACP, 2020).

The next area of competence is empathy. For a college wellbeing officer, it is very important to use empathy when talking to students. As students need to feel comfortable to be able to open up to the wellbeing officer. They should use BACP (2020) to help them to embed the skill of empathy. The BACP (2020) framework discusses how to do this. It states that a worker should communicate in a kind and welcoming way. So, in a college setting the wellbeing officer should be understanding and ready to help the student with what they need. The wellbeing officer should be able to respond in a manner that is appropriate for whatever is being disclosed by the student (BACP, 2020). They should also be able to show to the student that they know where they are coming from and that they are seen. Wellbeing officer should be able to respect others' beliefs and differences (BACP, 2020). They should look at making sure they are working alongside the equality act 2010. Making sure they follow the discrimination act and do not allow themselves to use their own biases and keeping a neutral ground no matter what they believe. The equality act 2010 states that in education there must be "the basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation" (GOV.UK, 2013).

Now looking at the third area of competence which is skills and techniques. There is a long list of skills and techniques that could be used. The ones that relate to a wellbeing officers in a college setting would be paraphrasing (BACP, 2020). This is talking back what the student has told you in your own words to show that you understand what they have spoken about (Counselling skills academy, 2022). Wellbeing officers should use listening skills and non-verbal communication to show the student is being listened to (Midwinter & Dickinson, 2015). Wellbeing officers can use non-verbal responses to help show different emotions towards the student without

interrupting by using verbal communications (Midwinter & Dickinson, 2015). They must be able to realise that they should not interrupt the student while they are speaking and do not give advice when it is not asked for (BACP, 2020). They should practice active listening which is when you listen actively without interrupting. Wellbeing officers should be able to mask their own emotions to not affect the student. Questions can be used to gain a better understanding of how the student is feeling (BACP, 2020).

The fourth area of competence is working alliance. A working alliance is where one person is helping another (BACP, 2020). In this case it would be a wellbeing officers helping students with their mental health or college struggles. Within following working alliances, it should a line with their role they have been hired for and within the BACP (2020) competence framework. There should be a clear boundary set between the two. Discussion on what is allowed and the expected outcome of working together. It should be clear set boundaries of confidentiality and making sure that the wellbeing officer has the consent of the student (BACP, 2020). There must be a clear line and understanding when their professional relationship is coming to end and making sure the student is clear as to why this is happening.

Finally, the last area of competence that a wellbeing officer should follow is personal qualities. Personal qualities is an important area as they must be able to understand how their own emotions can affect their ability to do their job to the right standard. Though some emotions could help their ability to perform their role (BACP, 2020). Wellbeing officers must have worked on their own emotions and make sure their past experiences will not harm their ability to work and get in the way of what is

most important which is their students they are helping at the time. For example, if they cannot do this, they should look at passing the student on to someone else who has a higher capability (BACP, 2020).

Within a college setting, wellbeing officers must follow college guidelines and government legislation to make sure that they are working within the right frameworks and abiding by the law set by the government. As discussed, previously they should follow the equality act 2010 (GOV UK, 2015). They should make sure to follow any guidance set out by their specific college to look out for the students mental and physical health ensuring everyone is safe while also looking at the framework set out by the BACP (BACP, 2020).

In conclusion, a wellbeing officer should try and follow the area of competence framework to enhance their skills and not change the role they have been hired to do. They should use embedding that is discussed in Midwinter and Dickinson (2015) to help these skills into their work. All areas of the competence framework link to a wellbeing officer in a college setting. Therefore, they should be following the guidance for professional context, empathy, skills and techniques, working alliances and personal qualities. The wellbeing officer should keep confidentiality and make sure to safeguard the student to do their role correctly (Welsh Government, 2021). Overall, making sure to follow both their set role and work alongside what is stated in the BACP (2020) Framework as part of their job.

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