

UWTSD

BA Humanistic Counselling practice

Evidence 2

‘Provide a reflective account of your experience at placement and evaluate a range o professional proactive issues and relating to other professionals and stakeholders’

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P150137

This reflection piece will be reflecting on my experience of being at my placement for over eighteen months, this will include reflecting back on my overall experience of the placement, the type of clients I worked with, what support I had from the organisation or if I had any support, their procedures, How well did it all work looking at the pros and cons of my experience and reflecting over all on myself as a person and as a trainee counsellor at my journey from when I first started in the placement to where I am now. It will also be addressing how I feel about my journey and looking at what I think of the process of my placement.

To begin with I started at my placement which is the Exchange Counselling service in October of 2019, this organisation has many different branches of counselling specialising in different ages and groups, they have counsellors in primary schools, comprehensive schools, colleges, NHS referrals and lastly Mansel street, Mansel street is where I first started my placement journey, here they offer free counselling to the community for anyone over the age of 18 to 25 year old's, the type of issues we would encounter would be anxiety, depression, stress, confidence issues and some body image issues. The exchange would offer 5 sessions and an assessment for these young people.

When I started with the exchange I had an induction week where here they showed us how to use their diary and note taken system, along with all the information we needed to know to work in this organisation. This organisation had a team of different types of people. The exchange also offered a range of support and training after the entail start date, they provided safeguarding training and telephone counselling training when the start of the pandemic started and all face to face counselling was put on hold, they also suggested we did additional training with counselling tutor which was very helpful and I believe helped improve my skills.

At my placement I worked here one day a week which was a Friday with the maximum of 3 clients a week, this was very beneficial to me as having only one day with three clients was the perfect amount to start my counselling journey, it was not overwhelming or daunting instead I found myself feeling as though I was learning so much from these sessions and putting into practice everything I had learnt so far about person centred counselling, as well as only working there one day a week

with three clients there were other factors which I found helped me not feel scared or alone, these were having debriefs at the end of the day with the two other trainee counsellors that volunteered there on a Friday with the operations manager and group supervision every month for 2 hours. I found having group supervision every month with the exchange was very beneficial for me as I was with people who were working with the same types of clients, however it was all still different. Group supervision is unique and as stated by Proctor 'Supervision groups encourages members to learn to trust their own perceptions while being open and receptive to different views' (Proctor, 2008) I personally agree with this statement by Proctor as it allowed me to listen to other peoples views and options and vice versa.

Reflecting on my overall experience of my placement at the exchange, I feel as though it has helped me grow as a person and as a trainee counsellor, allowing me to experience a range of different client issues and help people along the way as best as what I could. I have thoroughly enjoyed every moment of working at the exchange and have always had support and adequate training. After a year of volunteering at the exchange I was lucky enough to experience amazing opportunities one such as completing some hours in the college with supporting the students.

However there are some some down sides of my experience, as the organisation works in a 5 session model, I did find at some times where 5 sessions just wasn't enough as during the third or forth session is where I found the client to start to trust and open up to me about how they were feeling which then one session later we had to end, I felt it could of broken the trust and left the client feel abandoned. Another down side of my placement experience is when I started telephone working during the pandemic here they opened up the service to any age which meant I started working with people over the age of 25, which came with some difficulties with some older clients as they didn't want someone younger counselling them, this made me feel inadequate of my role and worried I wasn't good enough but as time went on and I helped other clients this helped build my confidence.

To conclude I have been very lucky to have a positive experience of my placement, I have learnt a lot from this experience including working with different types of clients, how to note take, using online diaries, safeguarding, telephone working and building my confidence in working with client's.

Reflecting back to when I first started at my placement I didn't have much confidence and was using basic person centred skills with the clients, however now I feel as though I can use a range of humanistic approaches and have found them very beneficial in having in my tool box. If I were to do this experience again, the thing I would change would be to have open ended amount of sessions as I believe this would be very beneficial for myself working with clients.

If I was to experience starting a placement again something I would do differently would be to take as many training opportunities such as CPD as I can to keep improving and to learn different skills for different types of clients or issues I may see.

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Evidence 3

‘Reflect on your client work and an issue taken to supervision; consider the impact this has had on your professional practice and personal development’

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During my time at my placement of the exchange I worked with 18-25 year old, however due to the current circumstances of Covid-19 I was unable to complete face to face counselling in Mansel street with these clients, so I moved to help and support NHS referrals clients over the phone which is still under the exchange. During this reflection I will be reflecting back on a client I worked with through the NHS referrals, I will be reflecting on the issue that was presented, what was my personal bias if any, was supervision beneficial for myself and has anything changed for my personal development and professional practice going forward.

Reflecting back on a client that I took to supervision, this client was having over the phone counselling sessions, the client was struggling greatly with a lot of things, this included struggling with alcohol misuse, recovering drug addict, the impact of Covid-19 and was in a highly distressing place. The client wasn't attending our sessions regularly and a couple was missed due to DNA'S, The client would often being very upset during the sessions, and was very distressed. After a couple of weeks of having sessions I took this client to my supervision, we explored a range of different opinions, theory's and looked into what was best for the client, for me I felt as though I needed this supervision to iron out what to do to help this client as I could see how much distress they were in and I wanted to give them some tools or something just to help them recover from the intense feelings they were experiencing.

After some discussion and exploring with my supervisor it was evident that right now counselling wasn't the right option for this client and they needed some more support such as secondary mental health services, for them counselling just would not have been beneficial for them as they couldn't engage, they weren't committed to the sessions which lead to them losing one of the 6 sessions each time they DNA. As discussed in supervision I wanted to talk to the client about this and see how they felt and if they felt they wanted to continue with the few sessions they had left, as I didn't want this client to feel abandoned. However the client agreed this was best to get extra support, so we then referred this client back to the Primary mental health team to get them more support in secondary mental health.

McMahon and Patton suggested that from their research the outcome showed 'The value of supervision in supporting them in terms of their emotional well-being and mental health and the prevention of burnout.' (McMahon and Patton, 2000) This quote from McMahon and Patton I feel as though I can relate to after taking this client to my supervision, as before hand I was very unsure how to deal with this client and didn't know if I was the right person for them. This made me feel as though I wasn't good enough for the client and I doubted my skills as a trainee counsellor, however after having supervision it helped me to have a better understanding and knowledge of how to help this client.

Reflecting back on this client it was a good experience to have during my practice as a trainee counsellor as for me I found it difficult knowing that I couldn't do anymore to help this client and had to refer them for extra support. However from taking them to supervision and having the support of my supervisor it was very clear just how beneficial this was for both knowing how to help support the client and also for myself to work through why I felt like a failure for this client, it highlighted how much supervision helps and supports the counsellor. However reflecting back on this client there are parts which I believed I could of done better, this would include going for support to my supervisor sooner to debrief with them as I am a trainee counsellor I'm still learning and believed from working over the phone at home it is difficult as the end of day debrief in a group is missed as it is now all done over the phone with the manager or placement supervisor, I believe I would of gained more from the in person group debrief for this issue.

From being a person centred counsellor the client knows what is best and all sessions being client led, from learning so much about this and practicing it, for this client it was very difficult to go against what I've learnt and practised to take the reigns as the counsellor and suggest to the client that counselling may not be the right time, for me I found this very difficult and it went against everything I believe in, Carl roger's was the founder that the client knows best and as stated by Mearns, Thorne and McLeod 'It is the client who knows what hurts and where the pain lies and it tis the client who, in the final analysis, will discover the way forward' (Mearns, Thorne and Mcleod, 2013)

To conclude I believe I have learnt a lot from this experience I realised that I sadly can't help everyone who comes for counselling, this was a very good learning experience and showed me how using the right supervision can benefit both myself and what's right for the client. For myself it has taught me to not be so hard on myself and realise that sometimes some client's may need a little more support than counselling and that it is okay to just sit there and support someone when they are crying over the phone as sometimes that's all they need. If this was to happen again I would not change anything except for maybe having a debrief face to face at the end of each counselling day.

To improve reflecting overall on this situation with this client the only thing I believe I need to know to improve for next time could be to confide in personal tutors for support surrounding an issue such as this and to also have more of a discussion about this or ask for some help with my supervisor.

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Evidence 4

‘Reflect on a CPD or practice-based activity and its impact on client work and professional practice’

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For this final reflection piece it will be reflecting on a CPD training I completed when I in my second year of my university course humanistic counselling practice in 2019, it will be exploring the training I did reflecting back on what I discovered and learnt by exploring how I felt, if I learnt anything new, it will also reflect if this particular training had an impact on my professional practice and if so what? and lastly it will explore if this particular CPD training sparked an interest for me in this type of client range and if so what and to explore some more.

The CPD that I attended was a training day on transgender clients this was done by the Carmarthenshire counselling service, the training day looked at lots of different avenues and situations regarding transgender, it mainly addressed young people who were wanting to change sex and how the wonderful team Mermaids helped the children who were experiencing these feelings, this training day also looked at how difficult it is for these children who are one sex and believe and feel as though they are in the wrong body, that is when the training came in exploring how as a counsellor they would be able to help the young person with this issue and to help them along the change process and much more.

When I attended this training I knew very little surrounding this topic area of transgender people and even before they want to change what difficulties these young people faced, It fascinated me that children 16 and younger know that they were born as the wrong gender and are so unhappy as the gender they are that it can effect their mental health drastically. With the support of mermaids they are there for these young people and children to help them with the change of gender and support their mental health, young people under 16's are so unhappy they know they are in the wrong body and would like to start the process of the change and until 2021 the high court stated that under 16 could not get consent for hormone blockers, however in march 2021 mermaids addressed that a high court ruling now states 'parents and guardians can, in most cases, consent to puberty blocker on behalf of their children without having to go to court' (Mermaids, 2021)

From attending this training I left there shocked at how oblivious I was to this issue, young people are suffering every day both mentally and physically with how they look and sadly it is not well known in the community compared to other mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression, however it is stated by Olson et al in their study that 'By and large, studies of children with GID reported high rates of psychopathology, especially internalising disorders such as anxiety and depression.' (Olson et al, 2015). For myself attending this training day was the best training I had done as it made me aware of how many young children know they are in the wrong body and how organisations such as mermaids are there to help and continue working for these children to get the rights they deserve to be in the gender they truly are, for myself it was a shock at how much work has to be done to get these children into the right bodies and in the meantime these children and young people are going through emotional trauma. Reflecting back onto this training day I'm quite disappointed in myself that I didn't know more about what was going on for these young people and people of any age.

Reflecting on attending this CPD training I overall gained a lot of knowledge and good experience, it made me more aware of types of clients I may one day encounter and it gave me some tools and skills to help these young people or people of any age who may be going through this battle with themselves, as well as tools they gave me a range of books for young people talking about these difficult feelings they may be having and letting them know it is okay and they shouldn't be ashamed like the world sometimes says they should be. The only bad thing about this CPD training is that there was not enough time to go through everything which was disappointing but made me want to go and do my own research surrounding this area.

Furthermore after attending this training it sparked an interest in myself to look more into research surrounding this area and how to incorporate it into practice, this topic is in high demand to help these young people who would like to change gender, unfortunately there is very little research to suggest how to best help these young people, it has been asked more research is done as stated by Weir and Piquette 'how best to support young people whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth, to long-term effects of hormone therapy' (Weir and Piquette, 2018)

To conclude I am very glad I attended this particular training of transgender as it highlighted and opened my eyes up to a word I was oblivious of, this will hopefully help further my skills in practice and always be aware of the types of client's issues that may arise, for myself this was so beneficial and I believe more people should be aware of the difficulties these young people and adults face. The only thing I believe I would change about this experience is to have attended sooner and to continue developing my knowledge on this topic.

For the future to improve my knowledge and practice skills I believe I need to attend more training regarding this topic and keep on top of my research as it is changing all the time as the years are going on, thankfully it is becoming more and more well known and developing facilities to help with these young people and adults who feel as though they are in the wrong gender.

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