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Practicum 2

**‘Critically reflect on your counselling work with a client,
explore ethical issues, application of theory, process
recall and use of supervision.’**

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This essay will be looking at and exploring a counselling session that has been completed by a trainee counsellor and volunteer client who have been working together in triad groups for a few months, it is to be kept in mind that the volunteer client is a class peer to the trainee counsellor as this is completed in a uni setting. The counselling session that this essay will be focussing on is a eighteen minutes and fifty seconds long, throughout this essay it will keep referring back to this video and exploring what the trainee counsellor is like throughout and will look at how the counsellor is in the session, so for example it will look at their body language, if they are actively listening to the client, if they are paraphrasing, if they have a good therapeutic relationship or if they are using the core conditions and much more, it will also be looking into what theory the trainee counsellor has decided to use, and look if they are continuing with that theory throughout or if they use different theory's. After exploring the theory or theory's used it will then explore the strengths and weakness of the whole session, it will explore in detail these strengths and weakness and look at it if it was to be done again what would be changed and what would stay the same.

Another aspect of this essay that will be explored is to look at diversity and ethical issues, it will look at if there is any diversity or ethical issues during this session and if so it will be explored and will look at the importance of knowing about diversity and ethical issues as even if its not in this session between the trainee counsellor and volunteer client it may happen in another session in the future, but if there are not any issues then it will look into how important it is to be aware of situations like this as it could have an effect on the therapeutic relationship and the whole counselling session. Lastly the whole essay will then be summed up, and everything that has been mentioned in the essay will be explored and concluded.

Firstly this part of the essay will start off by focussing on the whole process of the therapy session between the trainee counsellor and the volunteer client, this will give the reader a greater understanding of what is taking place during the session and get a better awareness of the process of the counselling session.

The start of the session between the trainee counsellor and the volunteer client opens up with the counsellors welcoming the client to the session, it is made aware to the viewer that this is not the first counselling session that they have had together as the counsellor gives a warm welcome back and addresses the client back to the contract just to make sure that she is still happy with it and what it entails.

Having a contract in each counselling session is very important as without this the counsellor could be putting their self and the the client in harms way. After the contract has been addressed and the counsellor opens the session by asking the client what has brought them there today and the sessions start by giving the client the space, time and trust to open up about what they have been struggling with or to something that has been on their mind, in this session between the trainee counsellor and volunteer client, the client starts off the session by explaining to the counsellor that she has been feeling very anxious lately and is unsure where this feeling is coming from as she has never had this feeling in the past before and has never had panic attacks or anything like that to make her feel this way, so the client is starting to feel quite confused and is unsure of where this feeling has stemmed from, the client mentions how she's found it sometimes happens when she's in the car or when she's in a surroundings of large groups of people. The counsellor picked up on that statement by the client when she said that when she's in the car and the radio is off she sometimes feels a flood of anxiety, so the counsellor asked if it

was just in the car she felt like that or if it was in other situations, by the counsellor noticing this and asking an open question it gave the client the opportunity to think if it was just in the car she felt like that or if she noticed it in other situations as if it was just the car then they could have explored why it was just in that scenario but the client noticed that no it was in any situation it just comes over her in floods.

This opened the session up more then as the client started to explore situations to when she's felt this anxious feelings, the counsellor starts looking into these feelings that the client has been having and trying to work together to see when she first started feeling this feeling of anxiousness. The client starts to look more into her feelings and trying to work with the counsellor to notice why these feelings are occurring, the client feels as though she may have an idea of what these feelings are as she says when it started around christmas time she put it down to the stress of christmas, but since christmas it hasn't gone and the anxiousness and reoccurring feeling of forgetting something keeps popping up, she then puts it down to the stress of uni and feeling uncertain about what will happen next for her, the counsellor picks up on this feeling of confusion and paraphrases back to her "confused" to open the feeling of confusion up to the client to think is it really confusion that she's feeling or is it something else, the client then goes on to say well maybe its because her routine was broken and she now does not have enough time for the stuff she enjoyed such as exercise class's. The counsellor picks up on this and hears what she's saying about time and her not having enough time for the stuff she enjoys and looks into the client not having enough time for the self care she needs.

The counsellor then goes onto exploring where the client is feeling these feelings of anxiety, as this can be very helpful to some clients as it helps them understand and know where the feelings of anxiety are coming from in their body. The client explains where the

feelings are coming from, she's explains that it starts off in her chest and then floods out into her arms which gives her a tingly feeling down her arms, as she's talking about this she's got a curious but thoughtful look on her face as if it looks like she's feeling these feelings all over again, which can help the session as the client can express how these feelings are making them feel and can then be explored in the session.

The counsellor goes on to reflect the feelings the client is feeling saying 'the fear of the unknown' as its clear from the client saying this and from her body language when she is talking about these feelings of anxiety its as if she's trying to find a logical answer to these feelings rather than accepting and working through them.

Furthermore after the client realised how the feeling of anxiety was making her feel physically it was as if it allowed her to look more into these feelings she's been getting. The counsellor then brings it back to the self care that was mentioned in the early part of the session and was noticed that when she stopped doing this, it was then that these feelings of anxiety started, the client admits that it made sense that its since the lack of self care these feelings have a raised.

As the session goes on and is coming close to the end it is seen that the client is starting to understand why she may be feeling some of these anxious feelings, as the counsellor addresses to her that she's been talking a lot about the future and worrying what's going to happen next with uni and different situations, and it sounds as though that she wasn't being in the moment and from that statement made by the counsellor the session keeps flowing and it is becoming more and more noticeable to the client that yes she hasn't been taking any self care recently and hasn't been "being" in the moment, as its was coming close the end her whole body language started to change and she started to open up

more, her facial expressions started to relax and she started to smile, it looked although she was starting to understand some of these feelings and that she's been looking into the future and worrying about what will happen next which would give her the anxiety and the fear of not having any control over the situations. For the client it looked like the session of eighteen minutes really did help her figure out why these feelings were occurring and gave her some space to realise what she was missing and that was self care.

Subsequent to exploring the process of the counselling session there were some strengths and weakness's that were picked up throughout. Firstly one of the things that were picked up at the very start of the counselling session was when the counsellor was addressing the client back to the contract and explaining that if there was information that would indicate the client was at harm to her self then it would have to be reported to the appropriate person, the counsellor did not mention if the client would be at harm to anyone else as well that it would have to be disclosed to the appropriate service, although it is in the contract from the very start with this client, when the counsellor did not say this then it could have caused some confusion and if in that particular session it was evident that the client was at harm to others then the counsellor could have been in trouble ethically as they missed out on very important information.

The session carried on after that it was clear that the counsellor had very good body language, it was open and welcoming, she has a soft smile on her face when welcoming the client back and she also had soft eyes and very good eye contact with the client, which would make the client feel as though they were being listened too and not being judged by the counsellor.

Throughout the start of the session the counsellor was actively listening using minimum encouragers such as nodding and responding, with either words or her facial expressions. As the sessions started flowing it was noticeable that the client was very unsure of how they were feeling all they knew was that they were feeling anxious and was unsure of where these feelings were coming from, until the counsellor started asking open questions such as “how long have you been feeling like this”, “where are these feelings” and “is it just in the car you’re feeling these feelings or elsewhere” these started to open up the session and the client starts to open up and work through these feelings of anxiousness and find the root to her feelings. This was done very well as the client started responding to these questions.

What was noticed was the counsellors hands did fidget now and again so for future counselling sessions that should be monitored and noticed, as it could distract the client. One other thing that was noticeable throughout the session was that the counsellor could have picked up on some more words that the client were saying for them to address how the client was actually feeling as this could have been an important part to the feelings the client was feeling and it could have been missed, some important words was picked up and was addressed but more could have been.

Towards the end of the session the client is starting to link everything together and it looks as though she is having a lightbulb moment and is realising maybe why she's feeling the way she's feeling with the anxiety and is working out for herself that what she's been going through is just temporary and she starts to realise what she needs to do to help these feelings, the counsellor asks the client “what would your ideal normal be right now” and this gave the client the chance to look into what her idea normal would actually be which lead to her realising how easy it would be to make happen.

Lastly the counsellor's summary at the end of the session did go quite well and it was evident that the counsellor was actively listening throughout the session and picked up on the feelings of the client throughout, the only part was it did seem a bit rushed and did end abruptly due to the timing, there should have been more time left for the summary and time after the summary for the client to address anything from the summary that they may have wanted to. One other thing that the counsellor could have done more throughout was to have picked up more on the clients body language and made more of an effort to bring that into the session.

When the client explained that they were trying to find a logical answer for the feelings she was getting, the counsellor held that and explored it with the client which gave her the opportunity to look deep into that and look at why there had to be a logical answer, after that was said by the counsellor it was although it started making the client think about it all and she came up with a few answers and it looked as though she was understanding the feeling of anxiety better and was feeling less lost by the end of it thanks to the counsellor's help.

From watching the session between the trainee counsellor and the volunteer client, it is evident that they have a good therapeutic relationship, as at the very start when the counsellor welcomed the client back to the session it was a very warm and friendly welcome and the client responded well to this with a smile and seemed comfortable to be starting the session, its very important that the counsellor and client have a good therapeutic relationship as without this the therapeutic process would struggle to be maintained as if the client did not feel comfortable with the counsellor then it would be less

likely that they would open up to them. In this session it is clear there is a good therapeutic relationship there as the client opens up about their feelings and can trust the counsellor. In some cases the therapeutic relationship may not be very healthy whether that is down to the client not wanting to build the therapeutic relationship or whether it is the counsellor, it can be quite damaging as they may not even want to try and work through their issues with the counsellor, they may try and test the counsellor by seeing if they can trust them in what they have disclosed. So by having that important therapeutic relationship the therapy sessions would tend to be so much more comfortable and trusting.

There can sometimes be certain issues that may arise in certain counselling sessions, such as diversity and ethnical issues. In this counselling session there were not really any diversity issues or ethnical issues that stood out as both counsellor and client were British white, young girls the only difference there could of been is their religious status but that would not be evident unless it was a religion that the clothing would differentiate the both. If in a situation there was to be someone who was very diverse to the counsellor then that counsellor should be very respectful and treat them like no other client. In some cases some ethnical issues can be quite hard to work through as some religions have different morals and beliefs and something that one religion does may mean something completely different in someone else's region.

Throughout this session between the trainee counsellor and volunteer client, there was a clear theme of the person centred theory being used by the counsellor, the person centred theory is quite evident throughout the session but there is a little part of Gestalt evident at one section of the session. The section where this is the most visible is when the

counsellor asks the client where do they feel the anxiety in their body and asked how it felt, this is just very basic part of Gestalt as it needs to be aware that as the trainee is in uni, some theory's are still being explored and learnt Gestalt is one of them theory's, but even so the part of the theory that was addressed opened up to the client to be able to talk about how the feeling of anxiety felt in their body when the feeling was happening, this was the start of the client working their emotions and feelings out as after they addressed the feelings of anxiety in their chest and flooding out to their arms with a tingling feeling it opened for the client to look at the different feeling they were feeling such as lack of control, panic and fear.

Other than that little bit of Gestalt that was used in the session the rest of the counselling session, person centred was used. The counsellor used unconditional positive regard which was very noticeable as she was non-judgemental physically and verbally and the client seemed as though she trusted in the counsellors as she opened up to her, the counsellor was also empathic and congruent, this was shown evidently throughout.

In this type of counselling session it was evident that the person centred approach was a good approach to use for this particular client and issue as the person centred approach looks at the client as the expert rather than the counsellor being the expert, the counsellor is just there to support the client and motivate the client to investigate the feelings and emotions that they are feeling and portraying to the counsellor. For this particular session with the volunteer client it seems by the end of the eighteen minutes and fifty seconds that by using this approach the client was going away feeling as though they have had some sort of relief knowing why they have been feeling this way, but they were the only ones that figured it out, as you can tell by watching the video of the session the trainee counsellor didn't go putting ideas into the client's head about what they were feeling and why they

may have been feeling it, the counsellors was there guiding the client along supporting what they were saying.

To conclude from exploring the video of the trainee counsellor and the volunteer client and exploring the strengths and weakness's it is show that there are a lot positives and negatives from the trainee counsellor and the volunteer client's session. Throughout the session the theme of what is going on for the client is there throughout the session and that is anxiety, it starts off with the client not too sure why she has been having this feeling of anxiety recently and along with that feeling the feeling of forgetting something keeps popping up to, even though she says that the feelings do not last long, she is still unsure of why they keep happening.

It is made evident to the counsellor that the feelings that she has been getting have only really been since just before christmas, she puts them down to the stress of christmas and thought they would have gone away after the holiday but they have not, so from the client and counsellor looking at all these feelings and the counsellor asking open questions and asking how long the feelings have been there it comes out that as well as the christmas holiday the client has not had any time since to go back to her exercise class's which she used to go to and enjoy as that was her self care, she also mentioned that the stress of uni and the uncertainty of what was going to happen had been playing on her mind.

As shown above all this information that the client has given the counsellor, the counsellor has not just got all that information by asking questions and pestering the client, the counsellor instead used the person centred approach to get all this information as at the start of the session till the end it was all brought together from the counsellor being open, trusting, honest, reflecting the clients feelings and also using the 3 core conditions. The

counsellor was there with the client and let the client figure out for herself what all these feelings she was feeling were or what events have caused these feelings for her, the counsellor just used the core conditions and built a good therapeutic relationship with her to be able to achieve the outcome of the client in the end feeling as though she knew how she was feeling and why she was having these feelings, she also had some things to take away such as trying to make more time for self care.

References:

<https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/person-centred-therapy.html#whatisperson-centredcounselling>