

Well-being officer

A well-being officer that works in Further Education collage in West Wales primary role is complex, he constantly needs to find a healthy balance between academic instruction and mental health support.

By helping students that face multiple challenges, like anxiety, low mood and social isolation, the officer is forced to balance one-to-one intervention with breaded campus-wide health promotion.

The competencies gained through the CPCAB Level 3 in Counselling Skills, he can ensure that the interactions with the students are safe, effective and ethically grounded.

The certificate in Counselling Skills made the officer more knowledgeable and changed him from informed support to skilled helper.

This essay will highlight how the application of Active Listening and the Core Conditions, mentioned in the BACP Ethical Framework (2020), helps the well-being officer to ensure the students autonomy and foster their resilience, providing professional support at the same time.

When the well-being officer does one-to-one work with the students, he first needs to use Active listening, a skill he learned by doing his training for the CPCAB Level 3. The core conditions from Carl Rogers: empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regards are what he will use when a student comes complaining about anxiety and social isolation.

Janet Tolman (2017) says in her book that “empathy is an outgoing process whereby one person strives to understand another and to demonstrate that understanding”. That means that when a student comes to the well-being officer, he is expected to listen carefully without unnecessary interruptions and say back what he understands, staying in the student's frame of

reference, the officer needs to encourage the student to listen to themselves to help them have another perspective towards their problems and difficulties.

At the CPCAB training, the well-being officer learned the skills to help him look for unspoken emotions and feelings, developing the right vocabulary to express those understandings at the same time.

This approach demonstrates the BACP (2020) principal of Autonomy, by not fixing the students problems, but empowering them to explore their own thoughts and feelings.

The students' experiences should not interfere with the well-being officer experiences, to do that he learned about being congruent in his CPCAB level 3 training, that will make him aware and able to receive the students fully.

Being congruent is helping the officer to be open and flexible and in a further education system, congruence is very important. When a student is experiencing social isolation is often hyper aware of authenticity. If the well-being officer is **present** at the sessions, this gives the student a sense of safety, a healthy relationship he can count on.

Because often in a further education setting the students can feel the power imbalance when talking with the staff, congruence helps the well-being officer to step out of the staff persona and by being authentically human, he can reduce the power imbalance that students can fear and that can make them reticent. This method will help especially the students that feel alienated by the traditional education system.

The CPCAB level 3 course the well-being officer did, helps him to react honest but professional in case a student says something shocking, by not pretending to not have a reaction, and respond honestly and helpfully. The self-awareness of the officer, from the BACP ethical framework (2020), is allowing him to refer the student to the correct level of care, if he feels overwhelmed by the students' distress, demonstrating a good level of congruence.

Unconditional positive regard as Tolan (2017) says “is the most difficult (...) to describe and perhaps the most difficult to achieve”.

During the time the well-being officer did the CPCAB level 3 training, he needed to learn to censor his judgemental reactions, focusing on empathetic listening, making this stage very important, putting his judgement aside made him the perfect person for helping young students.

When a student that did something regrettable, comes to the well-being officer, he can expect to be judged for his actions, even thinking that they are a bad person for doing that action. What the well-being officer first action in this case is simply reassuring the student that he does not judge him by assuming that his actions are coming from a good place. Even if in an everyday life this is not expected from people, meaning that they are not putting their needs aside is a difficult situation, but they communicate their fallings towards the ones they feel upset about, however in a professional setting is vital to do that to help your patient.

Working in a Further education system, means you mostly work with teenagers on campus and not a private clinic. There can be advantages and disadvantages on doing that. One of the disadvantages is the time of the sessions. In a private clinic can be longer, about 50 minutes, while in a collage setting the sessions vary from 20 to 45 minutes, taking in mind that the students need to fit the session between classes or bus schedule. In a private setting the sessions are usually every week, at the same time, giving the client time to plan, while in a collage setting, the sessions are check ins or drop-in sessions, making the well-being officer to be solution-focus compared with a private setting where the client can go deep into his feelings. But even in a short session, the well-being officer needs to use his active listening skills to identify the immediate internal frame of work of the student, ensuring that the intervention adheres to the BACP framework (2020) principal of beneficence, by providing timely relief for the student problem.

The end of a session is different too when it comes to the comparison from private to collage setting. The sessions are shorter in collage and unfortunately the ending needs to come earlier, the well-being office needs to move the student from their internal frame of work to the external reality, and that needs to start with 15 minutes before the end, while in a private setting is recommended to tell your client 5 minutes before the end of the session.

While are some disadvantages to the collage setting sessions, there are some advantages as well. One of the advantages is that the students can access the therapy service when they need it without an appointment or the need to travel for the session, which will make a reticent student to feel overwhelmed. The collage promotes the BACP (2020) principal of justice, making mental health accessible for all students, despite of their finances or ability to travel to the private sessions. Another advantage needs to be normalising mental health among students and staff, transforming the stigma of going to therapy to a part of everyday life.

The BACP (2020) framework promotes two things that occasionally crash into each other: trust and non-maleficence. When a student comes into the well-being officer's office, he needs to be informed that even if what he says in the session is confidential, if in the information given in the session are sings that he is in danger, the officer needs to inform the right authority, to make sure a minor or adult in their life is not in danger.

A fundamental competence for a well-being officer is the development of a strong working alliance. What consists of a good working alliance are the agreements on goals, tasks and the development of personal bond as Bordin (1979) suggests. For a reticent student, this bond is vital for change. The use of empathy and congruence allows the student to feel safe enough to collaborate on the task for his recovery. This collaborative approach aligns with the BACP (2020) requirements for practitioners to work in partnership with the clients, ensuring that the support offered is not only clinically sound but also respectful of the student's autonomy.

In conclusion, the well-being officer's professional competence is not just about being a nice person the students talk too, it is a disciplined, ethical practice that creates a safer and productive learning environment for students in West Wales. The well-being officer professional practice is defined by the intersection of clinical skill and ethical accountability. He learned the "how" from the CPCAB level 3 training by practicing active listening and reflecting skills, and the "why" from the BACP framework (2020) by providing the ethical justifications for the interventions that he is making. This is not a conversational technique, but manifestation of the BACP (2020) principal of autonomy, as it provides the student with the space to direct their own therapeutic process. As Tolan (2017) says, without the ethical foundation, counselling skills risk becoming manipulative and move away from being transformative.

What the well-being officer is doing for the student is much more than talk with them, he leaves a lasting impact of their resilience by using the skills he learned on the CPCAB training. If he uses efficiently the BACP (2020) principals of autonomy and beneficence is raising a great question: How much more successful, the students from West Wales can be if their journey was underpinned by such an ethically grounded and empathetic working alliance from the very first day of education?

References

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I used the prompt: structure my essay plan to be easier to follow

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