

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.

Describe and discuss the counselling skills areas of competence that will be required for the role of a wellbeing officer based on the Counselling Skills areas of competence document.

This essay is going to be exploring what the counselling skills areas of competence framework is and how it can be applied in a wellbeing officer role. I will be describing what counselling skills are, and how they are used in a well-being officer role while following the guidelines of the competency framework. Finally, I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the counselling skills areas of competence framework. The overall goal of the counselling skills areas of competence framework is to help professionals use counselling skills safely and ethically (BACP, 2020a). Responsible and competent use of counselling skills includes recognising when someone needs support, using the correct skills to listen and respond appropriately, and finally referring on if the individual needs support from a qualified counsellor (BACP, 2023).

Before anything, it is vital to understand the difference between counselling skills and a qualified counsellor. The competence framework's project team working for the BACP (2022) states that counselling skills are morals, knowledge, listening and communication skill set that can support someone else's mental health and well-being. Counselling skills are embedded into many different job roles, but they are not qualified counsellors, and their primary job role is not to deliver counselling services (BACP, 2022). It is vital that those with only counselling skills training do not try providing counselling as this may lead to retraumatising, invalidating or distressing vulnerable individuals (British Psychotherapy Institute, 2025).

The framework outlines 5 main areas of competence. These are professional context, empathy, skills and techniques, working alliances and finally personal qualities (BACP, 2020a). It is important to have this framework in place as it sets out clear standards and expectations when professionals are using counselling skills (BACP, 2023). This leaves little room for accidental misconduct as expectations and boundaries are clearly outlined. Moving on to explore the job role of well-being officer. For this essay the well-being officer is based in a college setting and therefore will be working with over 16-year-olds. A Well-being officer's job role is to provide 1-1 support to those in the college who are struggling and signpost them to further support if needed. They support students to ensure workload is being managed and ensure they can continue with their studies. They also work with tutors to help support the students and promote overall well-being throughout the college (coleg y Cymoedd, 2022). Counselling skills will mostly be used during the 1-1 support aspect of the job, as this is when the well-being officer will be engaging in sensitive conversations with students.

Starting off with the first area of competence which is professional context. This area ensures that professionals are working within the limitations of their job role and following legislation and job specific policies alongside of the BACP framework (BACP, 2020b). For a well-being officer this would be ensuring that confidentiality is maintained but broken when a safeguarding situation arises and someone is at risk. This is important as confidentiality is crucial when building trust, breaking confidentiality when needed is equally as important as a well-being officer has a duty of care to the student (Younggren & Harris, 2008). It involves ensuring students' sensitive data is being stored securely and kept private. It would also

include working within their job role and using counselling skills to enhance their primary job and not change the job (BACP, 2020b). This would involve providing a safe space for a student to share their feelings but not going too deeply into their experiences. A well-being officer is not there to provide counselling but can listen to the students concerns and feelings. As I mentioned above, unravelling complex feelings and experiences with someone who is underqualified can cause serious psychological damage to the individual (British Psychotherapy Institute, 2025).

The second area of competence is empathy. This area involves using empathy to validate and show an understanding of the individual's feelings without self-disclosing. Validation is important as it promotes feelings of acceptance and respect within the individual. This helps them feel heard as well as improves the professional relationship (Gyan Sanchay university, 2023). Invalidation may result in poor emotional regulations in later life (Lee et al., 2023) this demonstrates why validation and empathetic understanding is so important. This area also states the importance of being aware of your own emotions as the person providing support (BACP, 2020b). In a well-being officer role this could involve the use of paraphrasing and reflecting to the student to show that you understand, and you heard what they are saying. These skills demonstrate to the student that you are fully present, and they have your full attention when they are talking about difficult emotions (Counselling Tutor, 2016). In sessions it is likely that a student may talk about something upsetting however well-being officers will be trained on how to manage their own emotions during a session with student; this is important as the attention should always be on the student and their experiences.

The third area of competence is skills and techniques. This area of competence involves appropriate and safe use of counselling skills and knowledge (BACP, 2020b). Some of the skills listed include active listening to verbal and non-verbal communication, paraphrasing and reflecting which was mentioned above and focusing which helps support the individual to prioritise what to discuss (BACP, 2020b). Although a well-being officer does not provide counselling, they use a myriad of counselling skills day-to-day within their role. They use counselling skills to provide the effective support, and the skills can help them build rapport and trust with the students. Some of the skills they use are non-verbal communication. This looks like good eye-contact, open posture and small nods to show active listening (BACP, 2020b). For a well-being officer use of this skill will help the student open up and trust them as they look interested in what the student is talking about. Another skill that well-being officers use is open ended and closed questions. This skill helps the wellbeing officer gather more information about the feelings or experience the student is describing (BACP, 2020b). This skill is crucial for risk assessing and safeguarding as it allows the wellbeing officer to determine the level of risk the student is at and what action needs to be taken.

The fourth area of competence is working alliance. This area focuses on the professional relationship; in this essay it would be relationship between well-being officer and student. It may also include working together with guardians or other professionals to support the individual (BACP, 2020b). Within a well-being officer role building rapport with the students is vital and will make supporting the student a lot easier. If a strong relationship has been established the student will feel able to share more and support will

be more effective (English et al., 2022). However, the relationship must have strict boundaries to keep the student and well-being officer safe. The main take away from this area of competence is that the student is in the centre of the relationship. The well-being officer must keep their personal details and experiences private, self-disclosure is rarely acceptable and it is always safer to keep personal details private (BACP, 2020b).

The final area of competence is personal qualities. This includes awareness of own feelings and experiences, how they can help enhance use of skills and how they can negatively impact use of skills. It also includes being able to use own personal qualities to help use of counselling skills (BACP, 2020b). Some personal skills include kindness, empathy, emotional intelligence and patience. Being able to use these skills to help practice is important and will improve the support that is being provided. It is vital that well-being officers work through any issues and unresolved traumas before trying to get a job as they will not be able to show up effectively. The level of self-awareness gained from personal therapy will help a well-being officer manage own emotions when in session and helps maintain strong boundaries (Psyched to Practice, 2026).

The benefits of this document are that it helps professionals apply counselling skills they have learnt and enhance their job performance (BACP, 2020b). It is easy to read and follow which will allow anyone to understand the framework. Disadvantages are that the framework isn't legal and there are no legal standards or regulations regarding using counselling skills (BACP, 2022).

To conclude, the competency framework can be great help when professionals don't know how to embed counselling skills into their job, and it sets clear boundaries. It helps professionals understand where their limitations are on how much support they can offer. This essay showed the many benefits of using counselling skills in a well-being officer role and how well-being officers adhere to the framework to practice the staff and students.

Reference list:

BACP. (2020a). *A Guide to the BACP Counselling Skills Competence Framework*.

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/8889/bacp-counselling-skills-framework-user-guide-may20.pdf>

BACP. (2020b). *Counselling skills competence framework*.

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/8890/bacp-counselling-skills-competence-framework-may20.pdf>

BACP. (2022). *Counselling skills: An introduction for BACP members*.

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/competences-and-curricula/counselling-skills/counselling-skills-members/>

BACP. (2023). *Counselling skills competences*. <https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/competences-and-curricula/counselling-skills/>

British Psychotherapy Institute. (2025). *When Therapy Goes Wrong: The Problem of*

Underqualified Practitioners <http://www.britishtherapy.org/2025/04/08/when-therapy-goes-wrong-the-problem-of-underqualified-practitioners/>

Coleg y Cymoedd. (2022). *Welfare & wellbeing officer*. <https://www.cymoedd.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Wellbeing-Wellfare-Officer-Nantgarw-English.pdf>

Counselling Tutor. (2016). *Reflecting and paraphrasing*. <https://counsellingtutor.com/basic-counselling-skills/reflecting-and-paraphrasing/>

English, W., Gott, M., & Robinson, J. (2022). The Meaning of Rapport for patients, families, and Healthcare professionals: a Scoping Review. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 105(1), 2–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2021.06.003>

Gyan Sanchay university. (2023). *Techniques of Counselling*. <https://gyansanchay.csjmu.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Techniques-of-Counselling.pdf>

Lee, S., Keng, S., & Hong, R. Y. (2023). Validating the biosocial model of borderline personality disorder: Findings from a longitudinal study. *Development and Psychopathology*, 36(4), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0954579423001116>

Psyched To Practice. (2026). *Psyched to Practice*. <https://www.psychedtopractice.com/blog/the-importance-of-personal-therapy-for-mental-health-professionals>

Younggren, J. N., & Harris, E. A. (2008). Can you keep a secret? Confidentiality in psychotherapy. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 64(5), 589–600. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20480>