

## Knowledge of the basic assumptions and principles of PCE counselling

### Knowledge of the philosophy and principles that inform the therapeutic approach

An ability to draw on knowledge that the person-centred model assumes:	
	the centrality of 'experiencing' (i.e. thinking, perceiving, sensing, remembering, and feeling, along with the inherent meanings and actions associated with these modes of experience)
	that people are essentially relational beings and are best helped through authentic, person-to-person relationships
	that human beings are free to act in relation to their worlds, and consequently therapeutic change will be largely founded on self-determination and self-direction
	that the diversity of human experience is to be valued and treated equally
	the centrality of the assumption that people are motivated towards self-maintenance, psychological growth and development, and hence the realisation of their potential
	that the process of psychological growth and self-development operates throughout the life span
An ability to draw on knowledge that human experience can be viewed from multiple perspectives (e.g. intrapersonal, interpersonal, contextual, cultural and spiritual) and that as a consequence the sum of a person's experience is greater than each of these parts.	

### Knowledge of person-centred theories of human growth and development and the origins of psychological distress

An ability to draw on knowledge that healthy functioning involves experiencing in an integrated, holistic manner (and hence the focus of counselling is on the person as a whole (rather than particular symptoms or specific areas of functioning)).	
An ability to draw on knowledge that a capacity for integrated experiencing (and hence the fulfilment of one's potential) can be affected by conflicts within the self.	
An ability to draw on knowledge that psychological growth will be influenced by and takes place within a social context.	
An ability to draw on knowledge that people have a fundamental capacity to sense whether an action contributes to growth.	
	that emotional experiencing plays a key role in this awareness

An ability to draw on knowledge that human functioning and behaviour are guided by the individual's subjective reality.	
An ability to draw on knowledge that people have a fundamental need for positive regard from significant others.	
	that the absence of positive regard during the formative years adversely affects psychological development
	that the need to gain positive regard under adverse conditions results in the internalisation of the values and attitudes of others, leading to:
	internal conflict and disruption of the growth process
	the denial and distortion of experience in an attempt to reduce the anxiety caused by internal conflict
	inflexible evaluation of experience and unquestioning acceptance of firmly held beliefs about self and the world
	a reliance on the opinions and directions of others and the inability to trust their own judgement
An ability to draw on knowledge that people have the potential to develop a 'reflexive stance', allowing them to:	
	expand self-awareness
	reconstrue experiences
	make changes to their ways of functioning and living

### **Knowledge of the person-centred conditions for, and goals of, therapeutic change**

An ability to draw on knowledge that responding empathically to clients increases their self-understanding and reduces their sense of isolation and alienation	
An ability to draw on knowledge that to offer a warm, accepting and non judgemental attitude reduces defensiveness in the client and increases contact with the experiencing self	
An ability to draw on knowledge that being genuine and transparent increases levels of trust and models psychological health	
An ability to draw on knowledge that change is more likely when:	
	counsellor and client are in 'psychological contact':
	that counsellor and client are aware of and respond to each other's presence
	that counsellor and client are able to communicate and relate to each other
	mutual understanding exists between counsellor and client
	the client collaborates with the counsellor to decide the course and

content of the therapy
An ability to draw on knowledge of person-centred theories of therapeutic process, particularly that:
when clients experience themselves as fully accepted and understood by the counsellor this helps them to move from psychological rigidity towards greater fluidity and hence to change:
from being unaware of their own emotional experiencing towards fuller awareness and expression of feelings in the present moment
from being unaware of firmly held beliefs about oneself and the world towards a position where these beliefs are recognised, evaluated and, where appropriate, revised
from a lack of integration towards greater unity of experiencing
from an inflexible evaluation of experience (e.g. 'all or nothing thinking') towards an appreciation of the complexity of experience
from not recognising psychological difficulties towards experiencing problems fully and subjectively in the present moment
from externalising experience towards a greater sense of self-responsibility and ownership of experience
from inflexibility in interpersonal relationships towards greater flexibility

### Knowledge of the PCE conceptualisation of depression

An ability to draw on knowledge that PCE counselling conceptualises depression as resulting from particular types of emotional experience, emotional processes and ways of construing the self
An ability to draw on knowledge that PCE counselling views difficulty in the regulation of emotions as a process associated with depression:
where emotions are over-regulated and hence difficult to contact, leading to a sense of numbness
where emotions are under-regulated, experienced as overwhelming and impair the client's ability to function
An ability to draw on knowledge that emotional regulation is shaped by early attachment experiences
An ability to draw on knowledge that depression can result from the client's inability to experience <i>primary adaptive</i> emotions that:
are fundamental reactions to a situation
are irreducible to any other feeling

	promote a useful orientation to the world and to problem-solving
An ability to draw on knowledge that depression can result from <i>secondary</i> emotional reactions:	
	feelings which serve to obscure <i>primary</i> emotions and are a learned response to these feelings (e.g. as a means of replacing a feeling that is experienced as unacceptable)
An ability to draw on knowledge that depression can result from the experiencing of <i>maladaptive</i> emotion:	
	long-established, core feelings (such as feeling abandoned or worthless) that (because they do not map to the current situation) do not help the person to grow and develop
An ability to draw on knowledge that depression may result when the relationship between different aspects of the self is hostile (e.g. where a person experiences a punitive “inner critic”) or oppressive (e.g. where an aspect of the self is suppressed or silenced):	
	where these conflicts between aspects of the self leads to:
	a lack of ready access to feelings
	significant emotional pain
	the blocking of primary emotional responses
	the client feeling stuck and unable to take adaptive action
	a sense of hopelessness
	intense feelings of worthlessness
An ability to draw on knowledge that depression is associated with discrepancies between different aspects of the self, particularly:	
	where there is discrepancy between a person’s sense of who they are and their sense of who they would like to be
	where there is discrepancy between a person’s sense of who they are and their sense of who others think they should be
An ability to draw on knowledge that a reduction in the discrepancies between these aspects of the self is associated with reductions in depressive symptoms	

### **Ability to initiate therapeutic relationships**

#### **Ability to explain and demonstrate the rationale for counselling**

An ability to provide a concise and coherent description of the therapy for clients:
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	an ability to communicate the central belief in the client's capacity to discover inner resources for growth and problem-resolution
An ability for the counsellor to convey the position they intend to adopt in relation to the client:	
	to develop a collaborative relationship with the client that aims to share power equally
	to hold an accepting attitude
	to be genuine and open
	to engage with the client in a deeply relational manner
An ability for the counsellor to describe what they hope will emerge from the process of therapy:	
	that discussing problems can lead to a sense of emotional relief and a reduction in feelings of isolation
	that therapy is likely to increase contact with feelings and that at times this may be experienced as difficult and upsetting
	that therapy can lead to the development of new awareness and understanding, and to new forms of action and behaviour
An ability to help clients discuss their expectations of the therapy and help them to identify outcomes which are achievable	
An ability to clarify the responsibilities of the counsellor and those of the client in the therapeutic relationship	

**Ability to work with the client to establish a therapeutic aim**

An ability to understand the ways in which the client views their main presenting difficulties:	
	an ability for the counsellor to track those areas that are emotionally significant for the client
	an ability to understand the significance of events and experiences as perceived by the client and how these might be contributing to current difficulties
An ability to explore and locate a therapeutic focus with the client in the early stages of therapy and to adapt this focus as necessary during the course of therapy	
An ability to collaborate with the client to clarify their primary therapeutic goals	
An ability to renegotiate goals as therapy progresses	
An ability to balance the identification of therapeutic goals with the maintenance of a strong therapeutic relationship	

**Ability to maintain and develop therapeutic relationships**

**Ability to experience and communicate empathy**

An ability to maintain a consistent empathic attitude	
	to be responsive to the client's verbal and non-verbal communication
	to sense the emotions and perceptions of the client as if they were the counsellor's own (while maintaining an awareness of the counsellor's own experience)
An ability to sense and understand those feelings and perceptions of which the client is aware, as well as those that have not yet entered the client's awareness	
An ability to understand the potential significance of body language (i.e. facial expression, bodily posture) as indices of the client's inner experience	
An ability to understand the potential significance of paralanguage (i.e. tone of voice, intonation, diction, cadence) as indices of the client's inner experience	
An ability to identify inconsistencies between the client's verbal and non-verbal behaviour	
An ability to empathise equally with all aspects of the client's experience, even where these aspects are contradictory	
An ability to communicate empathically with the client in a way that conveys an accurate understanding of their emotions and perceptions, for example:	
	making empathic responses that the client can use constructively
	accurately summarising and paraphrasing the client's discourse
	accurately reflecting the client's feelings back to them
	using metaphor where appropriate
An ability for the counsellor to check that their perceptions of the client's inner world are consistent with the client's own experience, and to revise them in light of the client's feedback	

### **Ability to experience and to communicate a fundamentally accepting attitude to clients**

An ability to value clients regardless of their behaviour, attitudes and beliefs	
An ability to hold an attitude of consistent acceptance towards the client and to demonstrate this through a welcoming and non-judgmental attitude	
An ability to communicate genuine warmth and acceptance to the client both verbally and non-verbally	
An ability to respond to failures of unconditional positive regard (e.g. if the counsellor experiences rejecting and judgmental feelings towards the client) through self reflection and the use of supervision	
An ability for the counsellor to reflect on their own values and the ways in which these might influence their work with clients	

### **Ability to maintain authenticity in the therapeutic relationship**

An ability for the counsellor to be aware of own experience in an accepting and non-evaluative manner throughout the process of building a relationship with the client	
An ability to maintain consistency between what is experienced by the counsellor and the way in which this is portrayed in the therapeutic relationship	

An ability to be fully engaged in the therapeutic relationship
An ability to relate to the client in a non-defensive and open manner
A capacity to tolerate and work with strong emotions
An ability to relate to the client in a spontaneous way, where appropriate
An ability to relate to the client without adopting a professional façade
An ability to demonstrate consistency between verbal and non-verbal communication
An ability to match outward responses to the client with the counsellor's inner experiencing of the client
An ability to be aware of emotional, bodily and cognitive reactions to the client and to use these therapeutically
An ability to self-disclose and communicate experience of the client to the client, especially where this is:
relevant to the client's concerns
persistent or striking
likely to facilitate, rather than impede, the client's therapeutic process

### **Ability to conclude the therapeutic relationship**

An ability to work collaboratively with clients to identify when they may be ready to end therapy, e.g.:
where clients begin to look back over their time in therapy
where clients begin to acknowledge their achievements in therapy
where clients begin to plan for the future
An ability to initiate the conclusion of the therapeutic relationship when appropriate
An ability to negotiate with the client how therapy will end
An ability to develop with the client strategies for change and plans for action
An ability to review with the client their progress over the course of therapy
An ability to help clients make effective use of the ending phase of therapy:
an ability to help clients review their prospects for the future, taking into account their current social context and relationships
an ability to assist the client in expressing thoughts and feelings not previously addressed in therapy
an ability to help the client express feelings connected to endings, such as sadness and loss or concerns about dependency
Where the client does not have informed choice about the timing of the ending, an ability to discuss this with them in a way which supports their progress
An ability to explore with the client options for future therapeutic interventions should the need arise

