

Metacompetences

Capacity to implement treatment models in a flexible but coherent manner

An ability to implement a model of therapy in a manner which is flexible and which is responsive to the issues the client raises, but which also ensures that all relevant components of the model are included

An ability to use clinical judgment in order to balance adherence to a model against the need to attend to any relational issues which present themselves

An ability to maintain adherence to a therapy without inappropriate switching between modalities in response to minor difficulties (i.e. difficulties which can be readily accommodated by the model being applied)

Capacity to adapt interventions in response to client feedback

An ability to accommodate issues the client raises explicitly or implicitly, or which become apparent as part of the process of the intervention:

An ability to respond to, and openly to discuss, <i>explicit</i> feedback from the client which expresses concerns about important aspects of the therapy

An ability to detect and respond to <i>implicit</i> feedback which indicates that the client has concerns about important aspects of the therapy (e.g. as indicated by non-verbal behaviour, verbal comments or significant shifts in responsiveness)

An ability to identify when clients have difficulty giving feedback which is "authentic" (e.g. clients who respond in accordance with what they think the therapist wishes to hear, rather than expressing their own view) and discussing this with them
--

An ability to be aware of, and respond to, emotional shifts occurring in each session, with the aim of maintaining an optimal level of emotional arousal (i.e. ensuring that the client is neither remote from or overwhelmed by their feelings)
--

Humanistic Psychological Therapies

Specific metacompetences

Working with the whole person

An ability, when working with clients, to maintain a holistic perspective (recognising the integral nature of intrapersonal, interpersonal, contextual, cultural and spiritual aspects of the person)

An ability to take fully into account the clients' cultural and social context in order to empathise with their frame of reference

Maintaining a client centred stance

An ability to balance any tensions between the maintenance of the therapeutic relationship and the achievement of therapeutic tasks

An ability to maintain a balance between directive and non-directive dimensions of the therapeutic process

An ability for the therapist to adopt an accepting and non-judgmental attitude towards the client while acknowledging their feelings for, and reactions to, the client

Maintaining safety in the therapeutic relationship

An ability to balance the maintenance of a client-centred stance with the need to attend to issues of client safety and risk

An ability to hold authority and contain the therapeutic process while sharing power appropriately with the client

Maintaining psychological contact

An ability to establish and maintain psychological contact with the client at both explicit and implicit levels

Capacity to balance therapeutic tasks

An ability to balance the need for warmth and acceptance with the need to be congruent and transparent with clients

An ability to attend to both process and content in the therapeutic relationship

An ability to balance emotional arousal with the need for understanding and meaning making in the therapeutic relationship

An ability to balance levels of support and challenge in the therapeutic relationship

An ability to judge when it is appropriate to introduce methods that encourage active emotional expression

An ability to hold in mind and to monitor the client's emotional needs and capacities when devising and undertaking therapeutic tasks

Integrating the therapist's experience into the therapeutic relationship

An ability for the therapist to make use of 'metacommunication' (describing the impact of the client's behaviour and communications on them), and a capacity to:

judge when metacommunication might be helpful to the client

convey the intention behind the therapist's communication

explore the impact of the therapist's communication on the client

An ability for the therapist to recognize their own contribution to the construction of meaning in the therapeutic relationship

Working with complex relational issues

An ability for the therapist to maintain a sense of their own separate reality and experience while maintaining an awareness of the ways in which clients may draw them into particular patterns of relating
--

An ability to relate to the client on multiple levels:
--

in the “real” relationship, constructed through the meeting of two individuals
--

in the therapeutic alliance, where therapist and client work collaboratively
--

in the transference relationship, exploring the client’s past

[Back to Competences Map](#)