



**ASSESSOR GUIDE**

**CHCCSL002**

# Apply specialist interpersonal and counselling interview skills

Assessment 2 of 2

Case Studies



## Assessment Instructions

### Task overview

This assessment task is divided into 22 questions. Read each question carefully before typing your response in the space provided.

### Additional resources and supporting documents

To complete this assessment, you will need:

- Learning resources



## Assessment Information

### Submission

You are entitled to three (3) attempts to complete this assessment satisfactorily. Incomplete assessments will not be marked and will count as one of your three attempts.

All questions must be responded to correctly to be assessed as satisfactory for this assessment.

Answers must be typed into the space provided and submitted electronically via the LMS. Hand-written assessments will not be accepted unless previously arranged with your assessor.

### Reasonable adjustment

Students may request a reasonable adjustment for assessment tasks.

Reasonable adjustment usually involves varying:

- the processes for conducting the assessment (e.g., allowing additional time)
- the evidence gathering techniques (e.g., oral rather than written questioning, use of a scribe, modifications to equipment)

However, the evidence collected must allow the student to demonstrate all requirements of the unit.

Refer to the Student Handbook or contact your Trainer for further information.



Please consider the environment before printing this assessment.

### Question 1

Imagine that you are a school counsellor who, due to budget cuts, has been told that you must now share an office with the school secretary. Identify what communication barrier this will most likely cause for you and your clients (for example, students, teachers, and other staff) and briefly explain why.

[Approximate word count: 30 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must identify a likely communication barrier and why this would be a barrier.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

Sharing an office with the school secretary would likely cause an environmental barrier inhibiting communication. Clients (for example, students, teachers, and staff) may not wish to speak freely while the school secretary is also in the room.

### Question 2

Bill is an Anglo-Australian counsellor (50 years of age) who is seeing a new client, Deborah (an 18-year-old Aboriginal female student), for their first session together. They meet in Bill's office and sit facing each other. Throughout the counselling session, Bill seeks to maintain direct eye contact with Deborah. As the session goes on, Bill notices that Deborah is becoming increasingly uncomfortable and is not expressing herself openly.

Identify two (2) potential communication barriers in the scenario and, in the following table, provide an example of a strategy that would apply to overcome each barrier.

The first row of the table has been completed for you to give you an example format for your response.

**Note:** You must identify two (2) additional potential communication barriers and at least one (1) strategy to overcome each barrier.

[Approximate word count: 50 – 100 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of at least two additional barriers and at least one strategy a counsellor could use to overcome each.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answers.

Barrier	Solution
Environmental	Being seated directly, face-to-face, could make the client uncomfortable. As such, Bill could ask Deborah if she would be more comfortable with a different seating arrangement.
a) Age issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider referral to a younger counsellor.</li><li>• Acknowledge age differences and have an open discussion with the client about this issue.</li></ul>

Barrier	Solution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask questions to clarify the client's experience and seek to develop rapport.</li> </ul>
b) Cultural issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill could research Aboriginal customs and culture (and find out customs regarding males/females, age differences, conversations and eye contact).</li> <li>• Bill could ask the student about her culture.</li> </ul>

### Question 3

Aliya feels overwhelmed. She has three children under the age of five, is the primary caretaker for her mother, who suffers from dementia and is also trying to study for a counselling diploma.

- a) List three [3] key areas of cognitive functioning that Aliya's high-stress levels may affect.

[Approximate word count: 30 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of the impact of stress on cognitive functioning and how a counsellor might notice this stress and identify three areas of cognitive functioning.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Concentration:</b> May find it difficult to concentrate</li> <li>• <b>Attention:</b> Their attention may wander, and they may jump around from subject to subject</li> <li>• <b>Memory:</b> They may find it difficult to both remember key facts and process new information</li> </ul>
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- b) List three [3] indicators that a counsellor could observe to identify Aliya's high levels of stress.

Answers must include at least one example for each of the following:

- Verbal language indicator
- Written language indicator
- Body language indicator.

[Approximate word count: 50 – 70 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer. Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following examples.

- **Verbal language indicator:** Difficulty in self-expression. Clients may speak very quickly or very slowly, and their communication messages may be disjointed and non-linear. Conversation jumping around and inability to stay on topic.
- **Written language indicator:** Handwriting may be messy and difficult to read.
- **Body language indicator:** Flashing or rolling eyes, rapid breathing or holding breath, arms or legs crossed, sweating or flushing, staring or avoiding eye contact and excessive fidgeting.

c) Describe how Aliya's counsellor could communicate effectively and appropriately with her, given her high-stress levels.

[Approximate word count: 60 – 70 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must reflect an understanding that counsellors need to adjust their communication with stressed clients.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

- The counsellor should adjust their communication.
- This may involve slowing down the counselling process, reducing the complexity and speed of counsellor feedback and using frequent 'check-ins'.
- Not using challenging and reframing while a client is in a stressed or traumatised state. Instead, use supportive counselling strategies such as attending behaviour and empathetic responses.
- Ensure non-verbal communication is non-threatening by sitting further away from the client than usual and avoiding sudden movements.

#### Question 4

Read the following referral document and then answer the following questions.

#### Referral document

**Client name:** Ling Mei

**Age:** 14

**Nationality:** Chinese

Dear Adam,

I am referring Ling Mei for counselling to help address the stress she is experiencing in relation to her academic studies. Ling received a B+ for her overall performance this term but is upset that she did not receive an A.

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The following information is found in Ling's student file.

**VARK profile:**

80% Visual learner

20% Auditory learner

- a) Briefly outline two (2) potential barriers that might make it harder for a counsellor to communicate effectively with this client.

[Approximate word count: 25 – 35 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of two potential communication barriers.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

- **Cultural:** The counsellor is likely to be Anglo-Australian, given his name, while Ling Mei is Chinese.
- **Age:** Ling Mei is 14. Adam is older.
- **Individual perceptions:** Adam may think that B+ is great and not take Ling Mei's concerns seriously.

- b) Briefly outline how the counsellor could reduce these barriers and enhance communication with this client.

[Approximate word count: 50 – 70 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of how a counsellor could reduce their selected barriers to enhance communication with the client.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

The counsellor should check to see if an interpreter is needed (and use one if they are). The counsellor should also seek to use age-appropriate language and not make any assumptions. The counsellor should check in with Ling about her grades and try to understand her feelings and thoughts about her academic studies. The counsellor could use Ling Mei's VARK profile to structure the counselling session accordingly [e.g., use visual techniques].

## Question 5

Imagine that you are counselling a new client, Kevin. Kevin is describing an incident that happened at work. He is sitting bolt upright, and his arms are crossed. He is frowning and is quite red in the face. He seems to be looking somewhere over your shoulder.

Describe what you might infer from Kevin's non-verbal communication (what do you think he might be thinking/feeling).

[Approximate word count: 20 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an ability to use observation of the client's non-verbal communication to infer the state of mind.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

Kevin's non-verbal communication indicates he is uncomfortable and ill at ease. He may be experiencing quite strong emotions, such as anger or frustration.

### Question 6

Imagine that you are counselling a new client, Kyla. Kyla is talking about a difficult childhood experience. She is slumped in her chair with tears in her eyes. Although smiling, she is swallowing repeatedly and looking down at the floor.

- a) Describe what you might infer from Kyla's non-verbal communication [what do you think she might be thinking/feeling].

[Approximate word count: 30 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an ability to use observation of the client's non-verbal communication to infer the state of mind/emotion.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

- Kyla's slumped posture indicates resignation, while tears and swallowing repeatedly indicate distress.
- There is a mismatch in Kyla's behaviour, indicating that she is conflicted about the issue being discussed.

- b) Briefly describe the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies you should use as Kyla's counsellor to demonstrate to Kyla that you are listening to her story.

[Approximate word count: 30 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of appropriate counsellor communication strategies.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

- Active listening and attending behaviours.
- Maintain appropriate visual/eye contact.
- Remain focused on the conversation, i.e., verbal tracking.
- Convey attention and genuineness through body language. Match verbal and non-verbal communication.

- c) Describe appropriate specialised counselling interviewing skills you would use to support Kyla's strong emotional reaction when talking about her difficult childhood experience. Provide six (6) skills, including what you would say for each skill you describe.

[Approximate word count: 270 – 340 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer. Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of six of the following examples.

**Validation:** Begin by validating Kyla's feelings and experiences. Acknowledge the significance of her emotions by saying something like, "It makes sense that you are feeling overwhelmed and emotional when discussing this difficult childhood experience."

**Active listening:** Show Kyla that you are present and engaged by using active listening skills. For example, you could use minimal encouragers, such as nodding or saying, "Please continue". Then to show you are listening, paraphrase keywords and look for the underlying meaning, for example, "It appears what you experienced in your childhood haunts you to this day?".

**Empathy:** Demonstrate empathy by acknowledging Kayla's emotions and experiences. For instance, you can say, "I can't imagine how difficult that experience must have been for you. It's natural that you would feel emotional when talking about it". Reflect on the emotions of the situation, for example, "I sense how painful this is for you. You feel despair when you think of it?". Empathy is demonstrated by the reflection of feelings.

**Reflection:** Identify the emotions of the situation and propose them for confirmation or discussion. For example, "You feel despair when you think of this situation?" Help Kyla to identify her emotions. For example, use the feeling wheel to help her label what the emotions are.

**Open-ended questions:** Ask open-ended questions to encourage Kyla to share more about her experiences and feelings. For instance, you could ask, "What did you learn from this experience?" or "How has it impacted your life since then?"

**Monitor the pace of the conversation:** Slow the pace of the conversation and use silence strategically to allow Kyla time to process her emotional response. "Sitting in the pain" with the client is an incredibly powerful thing for a counsellor to do. Let them know that you are with them and encourage them to "Take your time; I'm with you, there's no rush".

**Grounding techniques:** You might also use grounding techniques if she becomes highly distressed. However, give her time to express what she is feeling first and don't jump in too soon. For example, "I'd like to invite you to do a simple exercise that can be quite soothing and calm you" [offer a soft cushion for the client to touch, for instance, or other sensory experiences on hand].

## Question 7

Melissa is attending counselling to help her with a problematic work situation. The counsellor wants to encourage Melissa to talk about what has been happening with her supervisor in more depth.

- a) What type of question [**open** or **closed**] should the counsellor use to achieve this aim?

The correct answer is the following:



### Open question

- b) Provide an example of a question the counsellor might ask Melissa to achieve this aim.

[Approximate word count: 10 – 20 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an ability to write an appropriate open question (for example, beginning with how, what, when, where or could).

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

"How have things been with your supervisor this past week?"

- c) After Melissa tells more of her story, the counsellor wants to clarify whether Melissa has reported the issue to her human resources department. What type of question (**open** or **closed**) would help the counsellor clarify this?

The correct answer is the following:

### Closed question

- d) Provide an example of a question the counsellor might ask Melissa to achieve this aim.

[Approximate word count: 10 – 20 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an ability to write an appropriate closed question to clarify this.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

"Did you report the incident to human resources?"

## Question 8

A counsellor, Imelda, and her client, Max, discuss his childhood experiences in boarding school. Imelda notices that Max is becoming increasingly withdrawn and giving monosyllabic answers. He seems tense and avoids eye contact with her, and she senses that this has been a really difficult, traumatic time for him. Imelda immediately changes the subject and asks Max what films he has seen lately.

- a) What non-verbal cues might indicate Max is experiencing a strong emotional reaction?

[Approximate word count: 10 – 20 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an ability to identify verbal/non-verbal indicators of the client's strong emotional reaction.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

- Increasing withdrawal and providing monosyllabic responses.
- Increased tension in posture and lack of eye contact.

b) Briefly describe Imelda's key responsibility, given that strong emotions have arisen in the session and the skills that she should use in responding to Max.

[Approximate word count: 20 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of appropriate responses to strong emotions in counselling.

Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following examples.

Responses may include reference to:

- Creating a safe, supportive space
- Identifying potential risks
- Counselling skills including -
  - attending behaviour
  - noting
  - reflecting
  - questioning.

Other appropriate responses may also be accepted.

A sample answer is the following:

"Imelda's main responsibility is to ensure that counselling is a safe space for Max, where he can express his feelings if he wants to. She should use noting, reflecting, and questioning skills to show her attention and understanding and help Max decide what he wants to share."

c) Is it always necessary and helpful for clients to talk about the emotions that arise in counselling sessions? Why or why not?

[Approximate word count: 10 – 20 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of appropriate responses to strong emotions in counselling by indicating that it is **not** always necessary or helpful to clients to talk about strong emotions.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

- Pressuring a client to experience or talk about something is counterproductive.
- Talking about strong emotional reactions can be emotionally unsafe.

d) What could Imelda say to indicate to Max that she is attending to his communication and seeking to understand what is happening?

[Approximate word count: 20 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an ability to appropriately respond to indicators of strong emotion within counselling.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answers.

"I can see that you're really upset right now. Would it be helpful for us to talk about what's going on for you right now?"

"I get the sense that you're struggling with something that we've just been speaking about. Would you be comfortable telling me what you're feeling right now?"

"Would you like us to focus on this? Sometimes people assume they have to talk about painful things in counselling, but that's not necessarily the case. We aim to talk about what would be most helpful to discuss, and it is fine not to talk about something, too."

e) What would you recommend that Imelda do if Max indicates that he does not want to talk about his experience at boarding school and how he feels about it?

[Approximate word count: 20 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an ability to appropriately respond to indicators of strong emotion within counselling.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer. Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following examples.

- Pressuring a client to experience or talk about something is counterproductive.
- Talking about strong emotional reactions can be emotionally unsafe.

## Question 9

Imagine that you are counselling Eloise, who is experiencing relationship issues. Eloise tells you that her husband has told her she never listens to him. You notice in your sessions that Eloise repeatedly interrupts you and ignores what you have said. You feel this might have some bearing on her communication difficulties with her husband. What technique would you use in this situation, and what would you hope to achieve by using it?

[Approximate word count: 30 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of the appropriate use of feedback.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

"I would use feedback. By providing feedback to Eloise about how you, as the counsellor, experience her communication style (i.e., interrupting), you can help her see how this might impact her relationship with her husband."

### Question 10

Imagine that a counsellor has been talking with a client, Melanie, about the difficulties she is having with her body image and how her husband, Adrian, has been exacerbating this issue by commenting on her weight gain.

The counsellor says, "So when Adrian comments on your weight, you feel ashamed but angry as well because you've told him before that it upsets you." What technique is the counsellor using, and what effect might it have on Melanie?

[Approximate word count: 30 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must identify that the counsellor is using noting and reflecting and the likely impact this will have.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

"The counsellor is using noting and reflecting. By doing this, the counsellor can help the client experience and identify her emotions more fully and may lead to a more in-depth exploration of how she feels about her weight."

### Question 11

Cam, a beginning counsellor, has just received a review of his work practises from his supervisor. Having observed a few of Cam's counselling sessions with clients, his supervisor has made the following observations:

- Cam's office is very messy, and he conducts sessions sitting behind his desk with his door open.
- Cam seems quite distracted – he fidgets and taps his pen on his desk.
- He tends to get stuck straight away, asking clients lots of questions about goals before the client has had time to talk about an issue in great depth.
- Cam's supervisor notices that Cam has a very specific way of running sessions which involves a lot of role-playing with all his clients, regardless of their learning style.
- Cam also takes lots of notes during sessions. He presents pages of them in supervision.
- Most of Cam's clients report finding it difficult to talk to him.

In the space provided, briefly outline what Cam is doing that might interrupt his counselling communication with clients and what steps he can take to improve things.

[Approximate word count: 150 – 200 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of what Cam is doing wrong regarding his counselling communication with clients, as well as what Cam could do to improve things.

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer. Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following example.

- Cam is not using appropriate techniques for this stage of the interview – e.g., goal setting should not be conducted until Stage 3 [i.e., the counsellor must first build rapport with the client and listen to their story]. Cam should work on structuring his sessions so that he can build an effective relationship with his client and help them discover what they would like their goals to be.
- Cam is sending non-verbal messages that he is not paying attention to what the client is saying. He should use appropriate attending behaviour and active listening.
- Having the office door open may create an environmental communication barrier where clients feel uncomfortable talking openly for fear of being overheard or seen. Cam should close his door during sessions or at least check with the client to ensure they are comfortable with the open door.
- Cam does not consider individual client learning styles. Cam would improve communication by matching his communication style with the client's learning style.
- Notetaking can be a physical barrier to communication. Cam would improve effective communication/active listening by reducing his notetaking.

## Question 12

Read the following client statements and provide a counsellor response that effectively uses the skill of challenging. Remember that challenges must be sensitive, appropriate and professional.

**Hint:** Reading D may help with this question.

- a) **Client statement:** [After indicating that she has just bought an expensive dress] "I'm really worried about how I'm going to pay this month's rent."

[Approximate word count: 20 – 30 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of an appropriate challenging statement/or question.

The following response is an example only, and students are not expected to provide precisely the same response. Any *appropriate* challenge should be accepted. Advice giving is not an acceptable response.

Example response:

"I'm a bit confused. Can I clarify with you? Earlier, you said that you had bought an expensive dress, but now you've said that you're worried about paying your rent."

**“Advice giving” is not an acceptable response.**

- b) **Client statement:** [Client breaks eye contact, sighs, and slumps in their chair] “Yes, it would be good to get to the library to get that vocational information you suggest...I know it would be helpful for me.”

[Approximate word count: 40 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student’s response must demonstrate an understanding of an appropriate challenging statement/or question.

The student’s response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

“On the one hand, you say that it would be good to get to the library and that you know the information would be helpful to you, but on the other hand, you do not look as though you really want to do that. Is that correct?”

**“Advice giving” is not an acceptable response.**

- c) **Client statement:** “Nothing is more important to me than my family. I like to spend a lot of time with them.” [A few minutes later] “My work is my number one priority – it has to come first.”

[Approximate word count: 30 – 40 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student’s response must demonstrate an understanding of an appropriate challenging statement/or question.

The student’s response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

“You say that nothing is more important to you than your family and that you like to spend time with them, but you are still putting work ahead of them. Are you aware of that?”

**“Advice giving” is not an acceptable response.**

### Question 13

Focusing skills are used to direct attention to specific dimensions and areas of the client’s life and experiences. The following box provides examples of statements/questions that a counsellor can use to focus a client on particular dimensions.

#### Scenario

Client statement: “Kerrie and I went out on our first date, but I’m scared she won’t want to see me again. I think I said some stupid things, so maybe she thinks I’m dumb. I want to call her to find out if she likes me, but I had to reset my phone, so I lost her number. I’m Facebook friends with one of her mates, but after how

the date went, I'm not sure her friend will give me Kerrie's number again. I told my brothers about it, and that was a mistake – they just gave me a hard time about it.”

### Focusing example statements/questions

- a) Focus on feelings: “You're feeling scared that Kerrie might not want to go out with you again.”
- b) Focus on the problem: “How do you think you could contact her to see whether she wants to see you again?”
- c) Focus on significant others: “Why don't you think her friend will give you her number again?”
- d) Focus on the context: “How are relationships approached in your family?”
- e) Focus on the counsellor: “I've found the waiting period after a first date scary, too.”

Consider the following client statement and write a response that uses focused responding for each area identified in points a) to d). Write these responses as though you are a counsellor speaking to Theresa.

[Approximate word count: 20 – 50 words per answer]

### Client statement

Theresa: “I just broke up with my boyfriend, Diego, and I feel pretty awful. He wanted to get married and have kids, but I didn't. I think I still want to be friends, but he won't have anything to do with me. My friends think I have made the wrong decision.”

- a) Focus on feelings:

The student's response must reflect the content in the following example answers:

- “You're feeling awful about breaking up with Diego.”
- “Would you like to tell me more about how you are feeling?”

- b) Focus on the problem:

Student responses will vary but must reflect a focus on the problem.

Example responses:

- “It sounds like you felt torn – you wanted different things from your relationship, but you still care about Diego.”
- “How do you plan on staying friends with Diego?”

- c) Focus on significant others:

Student responses will vary but must reflect a focus on significant others (e.g., friends and family members).

Example responses:

- “What do you think has led your friends to their opinion here?”
- “Have any of your friends told you they support your decision?”

d) Focus on the context:

Student responses will vary but must reflect a focus on the cultural or environmental context.

Example responses:

- “What ideas do you have about the sort of relationships you want?”
- “What kinds of relationships do you see among your friends and family?”

e) Focus on the counsellor:

Student responses will vary but must reflect a focus on the helper.

Example response:

“I find it hard when my friends disagree with my decisions, but sometimes they don’t understand my situation like I do.”

#### Question 14

Consider each of the following client statements and write a reframing statement that a counsellor could give that provides another reasonable explanation for the event or circumstance that the client is discussing. Remember that reframing must be done sensitively and appropriately.

**Hint:** Reframing is a challenging skill to master; you might like to review Reading F for examples of reframing before you answer the following questions.

- a) Marcel is studying at TAFE. He tells his counsellor, “I think my teacher thinks I don’t pay attention in class. She’s always asking for my opinion in discussions like she’s trying to catch me out and prove I wasn’t listening or something.”

[Approximate word count: 20 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student’s response must demonstrate an ability to appropriately reframe the client’s statement.

The student’s response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.



“I can imagine it’s frustrating to feel judged that way. I’m wondering, though, whether there might be another explanation. I’ve known teachers who really enjoy calling on students whom they know to pay attention and think about things because it makes the class more interesting to have that sort of discussion.”

- b) Billy started attending counselling after being made redundant at work. During one session, he says starts talking about his wife, Sarah. He says, “I’m worried that Sarah is having an affair. She always says that she’s working long hours, and when I took her out for dinner the other night so we could have some time together, she didn’t seem to want to be there. She just yawned all evening.”

[Approximate word count: 20 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student’s response must demonstrate an ability to appropriately reframe the client’s statement.

The student’s response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

“It can be hard having a spouse who works long hours, and when she seemed tired at dinner, that led you to worry she might be having an affair. Could it be that she was just tired from all those extra hours she’s working?”

- c) Jackie has a habit of quickly skimming through work emails, which means that she has missed important information more than once. She is upset after a work meeting and tells her counsellor, “I’m such an idiot. They were talking about this strategy that I have no idea about. It must be common knowledge – everyone else in the room had something to say about it. But I didn’t even understand half of what they were saying. I don’t think I’m cut out for this job.”

[Approximate word count: 20 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student’s response must demonstrate an ability to appropriately reframe the client’s statement.

The student’s response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

“Feeling like we’re not up to a task can be painful. But I suspect it’s not that you’re actually not able to do the job. I wonder if an email was sent around that explained what was happening, and you just missed it as you were skimming through your inbox?”

## Question 15

Counsellor Eric has developed an effective counselling relationship with his client, Carter, and has a good understanding of the issues Carter is struggling with. They are now in the ‘working’ stage of the counselling process, and Eric wants to help Carter develop insight into his family issues and implement the changes he’s identified as a priority.

Complete the following table by identifying which specialist counselling skill (**challenging**, **focusing** or **reframing**) would be most appropriate for Eric to use in each case.

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of the counselling skills.

The correct answers are the following:

Eric's intention	Specialist skill
a) Eric wants to help Carter explore his family dynamics in more depth to help him deal more effectively with issues he's having with his father.	Focusing
b) Eric wants to help Carter explore the current situation from multiple perspectives and consider his father's point of view.	Reframing
c) Eric wants to help Carter become aware of the discrepancy between what he says he wants (a closer relationship with his father) and his behaviour (staying out all night and avoiding him).	Challenging

### Question 16

Read the following client/counsellor transcript and identify which specialist counselling skill (for example, **challenging**, **focusing**, or **reframing**) would be most appropriate to use at that particular point and describe the potential impact this may have on the client.

a) Client: "So I was walking down the street, and there was Bernadette. I was so excited to see her – I haven't seen her for ages. She was across the street, and I couldn't cross just then, but I waved at her, and she just completely blanked me! Well, I was going to ask her to Rachel's wedding, but now she's off the wedding list."

i. What specialist skill would it be most appropriate for the counsellor to use at this point?

The correct answer is the following:

Response: Reframing.

ii. What beneficial impact might it have on the client?

[Approximate word count: 20 - 30 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of the benefit of reframing – i.e., that reframing highlights alternative explanations and viewpoints. The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

“The use of reframing might help the client think about another perspective (e.g., Bernadette may not have seen him; she may have been distracted with other thoughts, etc.).”

b) Client: “My family is quite religious, and they’ve always looked down on single mothers. I haven’t told them that I’m pregnant yet. I guess that’s why I haven’t really mentioned them.”

- i. What specialist skill would it be most appropriate for the counsellor to use at this point?

The correct answer is following:

Response: Focusing

- ii. What beneficial impact might it have on the client?

[Approximate word count: 20 - 30 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student’s response must demonstrate an understanding of the benefit of focusing. The student’s response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

“The use of focusing might help the client identify and focus on specific sources of conflict; in this case – the client’s family.”

c) Client: “I’m definitely going to call her. This has gone on long enough, and I can’t move forward until we sort things out.” [And then reports in the next session that he did not make the call].”

- i. What specialist skill would it be most appropriate for the counsellor to use at this point?

The correct answer is following:

Response: Challenging

- ii. What beneficial impact might it have on the client?

[Approximate word count: 20 - 30 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student’s response must demonstrate an understanding of the benefit of challenging. The student’s response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer.

“The use of challenging might help the client identify and reflect upon what is stopping them from doing this.”

### Question 17

Read the following extracts from a counselling conversation and identify which counselling skill (**challenging, focusing, a reflection of feeling, reframing, responding skills**) the counsellor uses.

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of the counselling skills the counsellor is using in each case. The correct answers are the following:

Person	Dialogue	Skill
Client	"I feel so confused at the moment. I feel like I'm being pulled in two different directions. I'm studying full time, which I love, but my dad wants me to give it up and work full time for the family business."	N/A
Counsellor	"You're feeling unsure and conflicted about these two options."	Reflection of feeling
Client	"I really don't want to work for the family business. I don't mind helping him out, but I have no interest in being there forever. I know that at some stage, I have to break it to him, but he says it's important that I'm involved. I feel like I can't leave, but I really don't want to give up my studies either."	N/A
Counsellor	"So, if I understand correctly, although you don't mind helping out, you'd prefer to carry on studying rather than commit to working in the family business, but you feel it's important to your dad?"	Responding skills
Client	"I'm happy to drop my course if it means that he's happy." [Tearful and looks down].	N/A
Counsellor	"You say that dropping your course would be okay if that means your dad's happy, but it looks to me like the thought of dropping out is actually quite upsetting for you."	Challenging
Client	"It's just typical of dad. He's always pressuring me to get full-time work. It's like he doesn't think I'll ever be able to succeed using my university degree."	N/A
Counsellor	"From what you've told me about your dad, he really struggled when he first came to Australia. I wonder if perhaps that might be why he's encouraging you to work in the family business – so you'll be financially secure."	Reframing
Client	"Yeah, it was pretty tough for him when he first came over."	N/A

Person	Dialogue	Skill
Counsellor	“You know, I wonder if it might be helpful to talk a bit more about your family and what the family business might mean for all of you. I wonder if we can get a better idea of how to approach things with your dad then.”	Focusing

**Question 18**

Imagine that a counsellor, Jake, has used the reflective practice cycle and identified that he has difficulty understanding the cultural background of his diverse clients, and this sometimes results in him allowing his own values to influence the counselling relationship. What could Jake do to address his gaps in knowledge/skills related to working with diverse clients?

[Approximate word count: 30 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student’s response must demonstrate an understanding of an appropriate counsellor action to address this skill/knowledge gap.

The student’s response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answer. Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following example.

- Discussing cultural issues and values with clients.
- Discussing cultural issues and values with an expert.
- Identifying and taking advantage of professional development opportunities.
- Being more aware of values and monitoring the counselling process with diverse clients to ensure this doesn't continue to happen.

**Question 19**

A counsellor, Alex, reads the following extract in the ACA’s Code of Ethics and Practice.

**ACA Code of Ethics and Practice extract**

“Counsellors are responsible for working in ways that respect and promote the client’s ability to make a decision in the light of his/her own beliefs, values and context.”

[ACA, 2013, p. 7].

Describe two [2] principles of the person-centred approach that would help Alex to counsel according to the ACA’s Code of Ethics and Practice.

[Approximate word count: 50 – 100 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of two principles of the person-centred approach and how they can be applied to counsel according to the ACA's Code of Ethics and Practice.

Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following example.

- Demonstrating acceptance, respect and caring for clients. This does not mean agreeing with everything the client says or does but acknowledging the client's position and adopting a non-judgmental attitude to help the client to feel accepted. This would help promote the client's ability to make their own decisions.
- Demonstrating honesty and genuineness in communication. Doing this would help ensure the distinction between the client's and counsellor's values and help ensure decision-making based on the client's own beliefs and context.
- Facilitating autonomy. This directly helps promote the client's ability to make their own decisions.
- Ensuring they are non-directive. This directly helps promote the client's ability to make their own decisions based on their own values. When the counselling practice is client-led, counsellors are less likely to engage in unhelpful communication or actions based on their own values and/or biases.

## Question 20

Read the following extract from a journal that a counsellor uses as a method for self-reflection.

### Self-reflection journal extract

KB was late again. I felt really annoyed and frustrated with her, so I told her, "You're always late for sessions – you're obviously not committed to changing your situation." She got very defensive. Not a great start!

I haven't been taking any notes as KB talks so fast [she's very stressed out, which makes me all stressed out as well!], so we had to spend some time reviewing the previous session. We used the visual charts, which seemed to work well for her.

KB said she hadn't attended her job interviews last week. I told her that I thought claiming from Centrelink for such an extended period wasn't right and that she needed to really focus on getting work. She went a bit quiet after that. Her boyfriend, Matt seems to be important to her, so I thought it might help to focus a bit more on her relationship with him. She seemed to be a bit more engaged then – sitting upright and making a bit more eye contact. Matt thinks that working is "for fools", apparently, and she spoke about how dismissive he is sometimes. She got a bit upset at that point. I showed her I was listening and helped her identify some of her emotions using the 'feelings wheel'. I felt we were on the same page then.

KB said that, actually, there had been a job that sounded quite interesting, but Matt talked her out of applying for it. She then said that talking things through in the session had made her realise that Matt had his own issues about work and that she would apply for the job as soon as she got home. KB also mentioned that she is having problems with her landlord as her flat is full of stuff, and she just can't bring herself to throw anything away. It sounds to me like she might have a problem with hoarding, which I don't know much about. I summarised the session for KB, including the goals for the week; I made a note to look up some information about hoarding and ended the session there.

- a) Using the extract, identify three (3) examples of things that the counsellor did effectively within their work with KB.

[Approximate word count: 40 – 60 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of at least three aspects of effective/appropriate counselling practice in the example.

Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following example.

- Use of visual charts. Using learning styles to enhance communication.
- Focusing on a topic important to the client (i.e., relationship with Matt). Effective use of focusing.
- Effective use of counsellor observation to guide counselling ["She went a bit quiet; she seemed a bit more engaged."]
- Effective use of attending behaviour and reflection of feeling ["showed her I was listening" and used the 'feelings wheel'].
- Use of summarising ["I summarised the session"].

- b) Identify three (3) opportunities for counsellor improvement within this scenario.

[Approximate word count: 40 – 60 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must identify three opportunities for the counsellor's improvement.

Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following example.

- Inappropriate use of challenging ["You're always late for sessions – you're obviously not committed to changing your situation."].
- Counsellor has not been taking notes ["I haven't been taking any notes."].
- Taking on the client's emotions ["She's very stressed out, which makes me all stressed out as well."].
- Counsellor's values impacting the counselling process ["I told her that I thought claiming from Centrelink for such an extended period wasn't right."].
- Knowledge gap ["She might have a problem with hoarding, which I don't know much about."].

## Question 21

Imagine that you are counselling Jamie. Jamie has been referred to counselling because he has been getting into fights at school. During the initial interview, you ask him about his home life. Some of Jamie's statements are presented in the following table. You must complete the table by writing what you could say in response to each of Jamie's statements using the indicated microskill and briefly outline the potential impact your response would have on the counselling conversation.

[Approximate word count: 200 – 250 words]

The student's response needs to reflect the content in the following sample answers. Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following example.

Jamie's statement	Your response
<p>a) "Things are really bad at home at the moment."</p>	<p>Write an appropriate <b>minimal encourager/minimal response</b>:</p> <p>Student responses must demonstrate an ability to use an appropriate <b>minimal encourager/minimal response</b>.</p> <p>Example responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Mm"</li> <li>• "Really bad."</li> <li>• [Slight nod of the head to indicate a 'yes']</li> <li>• [Slightly move the body forward to indicate 'I'm ready to hear more']</li> </ul> <hr/> <p>What impact would using a <b>minimal encourager/minimal response</b> have on the counselling conversation?</p> <p>Student responses must demonstrate an understanding of the likely impact of using a <b>minimal encourager/minimal response</b>.</p> <p>Example response:</p> <p>Jamie would be encouraged to elaborate on this point (i.e., what is happening at home).</p>
<p>b) "Mum and dad are always fighting about money. They shout and carry on, and it ends up with dad storming out and going drinking, and then mum gets all upset and goes to her room, and I can hear her crying."</p>	<p>Write an appropriate <b>paraphrase</b>:</p> <p>Student responses will vary but must demonstrate an ability to provide an appropriate <b>paraphrase</b>.</p> <p>Example response:</p> <p>"So, your parents' fights about the money ends up with your dad going out drinking and your mum upset and crying in her room."</p> <hr/> <p>What impact would using a <b>paraphrase</b> have on the counselling conversation?</p> <p>Student responses will vary but must demonstrate an understanding of the likely impact of using a <b>paraphrase</b> on the counselling conversation.</p> <p>Example response:</p> <p>Jamie would feel heard/understood and would have a chance to correct me if I had misunderstood.</p>



Jamie's statement	Your response
<p>c) "I hate listening to it. I get all wound up and antsy. Usually, I turn the music way up, so I don't have to hear them."</p>	<p>Write an appropriate <b>reflection of feeling</b>:</p> <p>Student responses will vary but must demonstrate an ability to provide an appropriate <b>reflection of feeling</b>.</p> <p>Example response:</p> <p>"It makes you feel stressed and on edge, and you want to block it all out."</p> <hr/> <p>What impact would using a <b>reflection of feeling</b> have on the counselling conversation?</p> <p>Student responses will vary but must demonstrate an understanding of the likely impact of using a <b>reflection of feeling</b>.</p> <p>Example response:</p> <p>Jamie would experience and understand how he is feeling more fully and perhaps be encouraged to talk in more depth about his emotions and feelings.</p>
<p>d) "Dad just keeps on saying things will come right, but I don't think they will – it's been going on like this for ages. The only way things will get better is if Dad actually gets his act together and gets some work. I've even looked up some jobs and put them right in front of him, but he always finds something that's wrong with them. Maybe I should just leave school and get a job, and at least then there'll be some money around, and they'll stop fighting."</p>	<p>Write an appropriate <b>summary</b>.</p> <p>Student responses will vary but must demonstrate an ability to provide an appropriate <b>summary</b>.</p> <p>Example response:</p> <p>"So, your dad keeps promising things will change, but they don't. You reckon the only way to stop the fighting is for him to get his act together, and you've tried to help by looking up jobs; or for you to leave school so you can bring in some money. Have I got it right?"</p> <hr/> <p>What impact would using a <b>summary</b> have on the counselling conversation?</p> <p>Student responses will vary but must demonstrate an understanding of the likely impact of using a <b>summary</b>.</p> <p>Example response:</p> <p>Jamie would feel that I have heard and understood his story and perhaps gain a better understanding of how the parts of his story fit together. It could also focus the discussion and provide a clear transition to the next topic.</p>

## Question 22

Imagine that you are counselling a 35-year-old client, Sean, who has come to talk about his divorce. During the session, he says: "I am really lost right now. Eleanor still won't let me see the kids, and I miss them so much. I can take her to court for a custody hearing, but the lawyer would charge me an arm and a leg, and I'm not sure I'd be able to trust him even if I could find the money. I just don't know what to do."

- a) In the space provided, write what you would say to Sean to provide an appropriate paraphrase of what he has said. You must ensure that your response includes all four dimensions of a lengthy paraphrase (for example, a sentence stem, use of key words, reflection of the essence of what the client has said, and a checkout).

[Approximate word count: 40 – 50 words]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an ability to provide an appropriate lengthy paraphrase that includes a sentence stem, use of key words, reflection of the essence of what the client has said and a checkout.

Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following example.

"Let me see if I have this right. You're feeling lost and unsure of what to do. You want to see your kids but you're not sure if paying a lawyer for a custody hearing is the right thing to do. Have I got that right?"

- b) Consider everything you have learned about counselling microskills and briefly outline at least one (1) appropriate non-verbal technique and one (1) appropriate verbal technique that you would use during the remainder of your session to help keep Sean engaged in the counselling process.

[Approximate word count: 10 – 20 words.]

**Assessor instructions:** The student's response must demonstrate an understanding of at least one appropriate non-verbal technique and one appropriate verbal technique to use during the counselling session.

Wording may differ, but appropriate answers must reflect the themes and characteristics of the following example.

- Eye contact, vocal qualities, verbal tracking, and body language.
- Questioning skills.
- Encouragers – verbal and nonverbal.
- Paraphrase/summarise.
- Reflection of feeling.

### Assessment checklist:

Students must have completed all questions/activities within this assessment before submitting. This includes:

1	22 questions to be completed in the format requested	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**Congratulations, you have reached the end of your Assessment!**

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