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Para-Counselling (Basic)

Learner's Guide

NAME:

Version Control Record

This document is subject to revisions and updates. The version number and effective date status are indicated at the cover page of this document.

Rev	Effective Date	Changes	Author
00	1/9/2020	New release (original version)	Environiche LLP
01	4/3/2024	Changed the learner guide from slide format into worksheet format	Environiche LLP

OVERVIEW:

This basic para counselling course equips you with the foundational knowledge and skills to provide effective support. You'll learn the qualities needed, like being non-judgmental and a good listener. We'll explore what counselling is and the different stages involved. You'll understand the role of a para counsellor. Through this course, you'll gain the confidence to have meaningful conversations and walk alongside others during difficult times.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this course, you will be equipped with the foundational knowledge and skills to provide supportive and effective para-counselling services. You will be able to:

- LO1. Demonstrate the essential qualities of a para-counsellor, such as active listening and non-judgmental communication.
- LO2. Explain the core concepts of counselling, including its different stages and the distinct role of a para-counsellor.
- LO3. Utilize active listening and questioning techniques to effectively engage with individuals facing challenges.
- LO4. Navigate supportive conversations that empower individuals to explore their difficulties and build confidence.
- LO5. Provide a safe and encouraging space for others during challenging times.



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We **support** workplaces to develop a healthy and thriving culture for their employees.

We **embrace** collaboration as the catalyst for innovation.

We **aspire** to a better society, where individuals make conscious decisions for a sustainable future.

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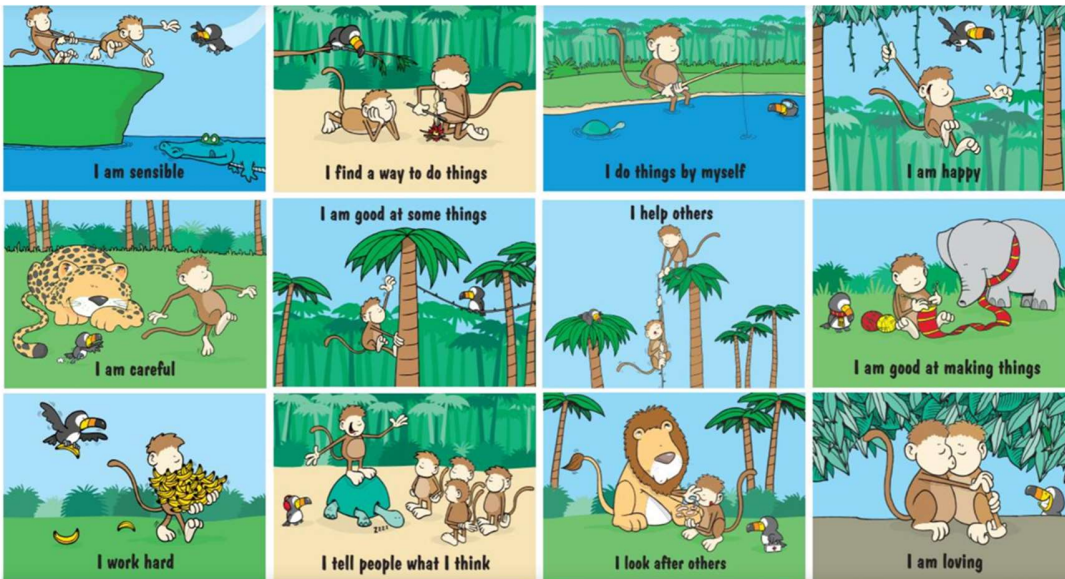
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1. Introduction to Para-Counselling

1.1. Ice-Breaker

Learning Activity: Self-introduction

- Name
- Occupation
- Why did you sign up for this course?
- What are the strengths you chose to describe yourself?
- How have these strengths helped the people in your life?



1.2. People might see a Counsellor for...

- Stress/Coping
- Grief/Depression
- Addiction
- Relationship Issues

1.3. Qualities and Attributes of a Para- Counsellor

Think of a helper that you have approached before. This could be your friend, family, colleague or a professional.

- What attributes do you hope that he/she has?
- How do you want them to treat you?
- What are some expectations you have of the counsellor?

A good para counsellor is someone you can feel safe talking to. They are non-judgmental, meaning they won't criticize you for your problems. They're open-minded and accepting, ready to hear your story without prejudice. They'll be supportive and listen patiently, trying to understand how you feel. A good counsellor is also sensitive to your emotions and genuinely wants to help. You can expect them to be sincere and honest with you throughout the process, creating a trusting space to talk.

Key Qualities of a Para-counsellor

Quality	Attributes	Personal Notes
Non-Judgmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open minded• Accepting• Supportive	
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understands how I feel.• Sensitive• Chemistry? <p>Empathy versus Sympathy Watch the video and identify the difference between empathy and sympathy.</p>	

Genuine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sincere • Honest? 	
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1.4. What is Counselling?

Do you think the video you just watched is counselling? Why not just talk to a friend? It's free!

Counselling is...A process that helps you work through your problems, regain control of your life, and improve your **well-being** and is based on an interpersonal relationship of trust.

Learning Activity: Poll...Circle the correct answer.

Counselling is suitable for...	
✓ Stable people looking for solutions to everyday problems that cause stress and anxiety.	✗ Only people with severe mental health issues
A Counsellor...	
✓ Fosters strengths / facilitates growth	✗ Gives advice / "fix" someone / makes someone feel better.

Friendship versus Counselling

Friendship	Counselling
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2-way street: give and take• Show support and concern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus always only on YOU.• Safe, confidential• Non-judgmental• Help to develop insight that guides future behaviour.

Counselling is...

- An intentional, outcome-focused process
- Empowering clients to be self-sufficient and discover their own strengths to resolve challenges.
- Based on a trusting, confidential and non-judgmental relationship

1.5. Para counselling in the Social Service Sector

Learning Activity: Read the article in the Annex to gain some ideas about what Para-counselling is about within the sector. Now that you have understood what counselling is, what do you think is the role of a para-counsellor in the social service sector? Discuss in groups and come back to share.

1.6. Stages of Para-counselling Process



As a client, you might be wondering...

Explore Concerns	Set Goals	Action Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is going on? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I need/want? • What are my goals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I get what I need/want? • What can I do to achieve my goals?

As a para-counsellor, you might be asking...

Explore Concerns	Set Goals	Action Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your main concerns? • What brings you here today? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you want your situation to look like? • How do you want your situation to be like? • What areas will make a real difference in your life when it is changed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps can you take to achieve your goals? • What resources/people can you tap on for support? • What do you need to do first?

As a para-counsellor, you might also be doing...

Explore Concerns	Set Goals	Action Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer hotline calls. • Provide clients with information about support/resources available to them. • Conduct intake assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clients with information about support/resources available to them. • Schedule appointments with clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clients with information about support/resources available to them. • Support the conduct of intervention by trained counsellor/therapists.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore clients' concerns using questioning and active listening techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write case notes. Check in with clients on how they are doing in between appointments. Set goals with clients using questioning and active listening techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with clients after the last session of counselling is finished to see if they can conduct their strategies well.
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1.7. Knowledge Check

Learning Activity: Summary of differences between a Counsellor and Para counsellor

1. Select **True** or **False** in the Poll!
2. You will be shown **10** questions.

You do not need qualifications to become a para counsellor.		Para counsellors need to promise clients that their problems will be solved by the end of the sessions.	
Para counsellors work with depression, suicide, and self-harm behaviour.		Para counsellors listen and provide support to people in distress	
Para counsellors give information about services and support available.		Para counselling is long term	
Para counsellors give advice to clients and help them solve their problems.		Para counsellors can provide follow up support after a person has seen a counsellor	
Para counsellors talk to client's family members outside of sessions about the client's issues so that family members can also support the client.		Para counsellors provide first level checks in ensuring mental well-being	

1.8. In Summary...

As a Para counsellor...	Similarities with Counsellor	Similarities with Counsellor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No formal counselling qualifications but trained in basic counselling, crisis intervention and peer support.• Relieve the burden of psychologists and counsellors.• The first level checks in ensuring mental wellbeing.• Follow up support/practical assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short term relationship• Give emotional and practical support.• Listening actively without judgment provides comfort to distressed people.• Sharing relevant information when needed• Support client's informed decision making and problem solving	Must NOT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Break confidentiality.• Make promises you cannot keep.• Give advice and solve problems for clients/tell them what to do.

2. Communication Techniques

2.1 The Art of Listening

Learning Activity Follow the instructions of the trainer and put down your reflection from the activity here.

2.2 Non-verbal Communication Techniques

S	Sit squarely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates involvement. • Sitting at an angle • Equal height and comfortable chairs • No obstacles in between
O	Open posture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows that you are open to and interested in what client has to say. • Shoulders and rib cage open • Do not cross arms or legs. • Non-defensive posture
L	Lean forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows you are present and interested. • Leaning too far back can be a way of saying “I’m not entirely with you” or “I’m bored. • Don’t lean too far forward or you may frighten a client.
E	Eye contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at client while he/she is talking. • Expresses interest and desire to listen. • Don’t stare. • Don’t look away too frequently. Hints that you are reluctant to be with this person. • Take note of culture
R	Relaxed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not fidgeting nervously or having distracted facial expressions. • Hands on your lap, or loosely clasped, • Being responsive facially (e.g. nodding, frowning when you don’t understand)

2.3 Verbal Communication Techniques

“You are a mirror, repackaging what client has said for them to gain clarity.”

- Giving clients a chance to process their thoughts and feelings and having the space to talk about it.
- Also demonstrates empathy.

<p>○ <u>O</u>pen-ended Questions</p>	<p>Use open-ended questions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more (e.g. "What happened?") • Understand feelings (e.g. "How did that make you feel?") • Explore options (e.g. "What might happen if...?"). • Open questions: encourage a broad range of responses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g. "Tell me about your relationship with your parents." <p>Tips for open-ended questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use "how" to understand feelings and processes. • Use "what" for facts and situations. • Use "when" and "where" for timing and location. • Use "who" to learn about relationships. • Use "why" carefully, as it can sound judgmental. Instead, try "what made you...?" <p>Use closed-ended questions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm details (e.g. "So you said...?"). • Closed questions: yes/no, or a number answer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g. "Do you have a good relationship with your parents?" <p>Test yourself! Are these Open or Closed Question?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="451 1758 1230 1960"> <tr> <td>1. What brings you here today?</td> <td><i>Open/Closed</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. What sort of things are you expecting from therapy?</td> <td><i>Open/Closed</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Were you planning on becoming a fireman?</td> <td><i>Open/Closed</i></td> </tr> </table>	1. What brings you here today?	<i>Open/Closed</i>	2. What sort of things are you expecting from therapy?	<i>Open/Closed</i>	3. Were you planning on becoming a fireman?	<i>Open/Closed</i>
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A	A ffirmations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stating out qualities, efforts, values, hopes and aspirations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E.g. You are really resourceful to have been able to cope with those difficulties. E.g. “Even though things aren’t always easy, you manage to keep a sense of perspective. Focused on the client, not your own opinions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E.g. You’re a father who always tries his best for his children, vs “I think you’re such a good father”. Builds confidence in one’s ability to change. Builds rapport, demonstrate empathy. To be effective, affirmations must be genuine and substantiated. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>What You Do</th> <th>Why You Do It</th> <th>Example</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Affirm (<u>Recognize strengths and values</u>)</td> <td>Builds confidence & rapport</td> <td>"You're resourceful to cope with those difficulties."</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Affirm (<u>Acknowledge effort</u>)</td> <td>Builds confidence in change</td> <td>"It sounds like you've been thoughtful about your decision." "You're really trying hard..."</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	What You Do	Why You Do It	Example	Affirm (<u>Recognize strengths and values</u>)	Builds confidence & rapport	"You're resourceful to cope with those difficulties."	Affirm (<u>Acknowledge effort</u>)	Builds confidence in change	"It sounds like you've been thoughtful about your decision." "You're really trying hard..."
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R	Reflections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements which help to check that you have correctly understood the speaker. • Is a <i>statement</i> - downward inflection at the end. • Reflection Stems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It sounds like you...” • “It seems as if...” • “What I hear you saying...” • “I get the sense that...” • “You’re feeling...” • “You’re wondering whether...” • Reflections can be used to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Build empathy. b) Encourage people to state their own reasons for change. c) Demonstrate that you understand what the client is saying. <p>Reflect Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating/rephrasing the facts and ideas of the speaker • Stay close to what they said but substitute phrases with similar words. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Client: I’ve been trying to quit drugs, but nothing seems to work</i> • <i>Helper: You’ve made the effort to quit drugs, but you haven’t succeeded</i> <p>Reflect Feelings and Meanings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures implicit meanings/feelings. • Says more than the client said (though not more than what he/she meant) • Be careful not to jump too far ahead or overstate. • Starts with “You feel... because...” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Client: I’ve been trying to quit drugs, but nothing seems to work</i> • <i>Helper: It’s frustrating because you’ve been working hard to quit but it feels like you’re not getting anywhere</i>
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Let's try these examples.

Scenario	Reflection Type	Reflection
This class really changed me. I've learned so much!	Content	You have grown as a result of this class and feel excited about your learning.
My friend has been asking to borrow money... I feel bad...	Content	
I thought I'd get the job... I can't believe...	Feeling & meaning	You're feeling disappointed (feeling) because you thought the interview went well (meaning).
I think my boss doesn't like me...	Feeling & meaning	

S	Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying only the most important things and feedback to speaker in your own words Can be used to: Check that you have correctly understood the main points of what the other person is saying. Bring one topic to a close and move the conversation on to another topic. End the conversation. <table border="1" data-bbox="454 616 1364 1344"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="454 616 710 772">Why Summarize?</th> <th data-bbox="710 616 965 772">What to Summarize?</th> <th data-bbox="965 616 1364 772">How to Summarize?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="454 772 710 913">Check understanding</td> <td data-bbox="710 772 965 913">Key points & main ideas</td> <td data-bbox="965 772 1364 913">Restate information in your own words</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="454 913 710 1198">Move conversation forward</td> <td data-bbox="710 913 965 1198">Main points discussed</td> <td data-bbox="965 913 1364 1198">Briefly acknowledge what was said & transition to new topic</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="454 1198 710 1344">End conversation</td> <td data-bbox="710 1198 965 1344">Key takeaways & conclusions</td> <td data-bbox="965 1198 1364 1344">Briefly recap main points & conclude discussion</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Why Summarize?	What to Summarize?	How to Summarize?	Check understanding	Key points & main ideas	Restate information in your own words	Move conversation forward	Main points discussed	Briefly acknowledge what was said & transition to new topic	End conversation	Key takeaways & conclusions	Briefly recap main points & conclude discussion
Why Summarize?	What to Summarize?	How to Summarize?												
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2.4 Things to consider when working with clients...

Skill	What to Do	Why
Understand Client First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid interrupting, talking about yourself, or offering unsolicited advice. • Let the client finish their sentences. • Focus on the client, not your own reactions. 	Builds trust and rapport. Helps you understand the client's perspective.
Give Full Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen actively, wait for pauses before speaking. • Use nonverbal cues (eye contact, nodding) to show you're engaged. • Allow comfortable silences. 	Shows respect and encourages the client to share more openly.
Don't Judge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice empathy, try to see things from their point of view. • Acknowledge their feelings without judgment. • Avoid imposing your own values or solutions. 	Creates a safe space for the client to express themselves freely.
Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower the client by helping them find their own solutions. • Guide rather than solve problems for them. • Recognize they are the expert on their own lives. 	Fosters client ownership and self-reliance. Leads to more sustainable solutions.

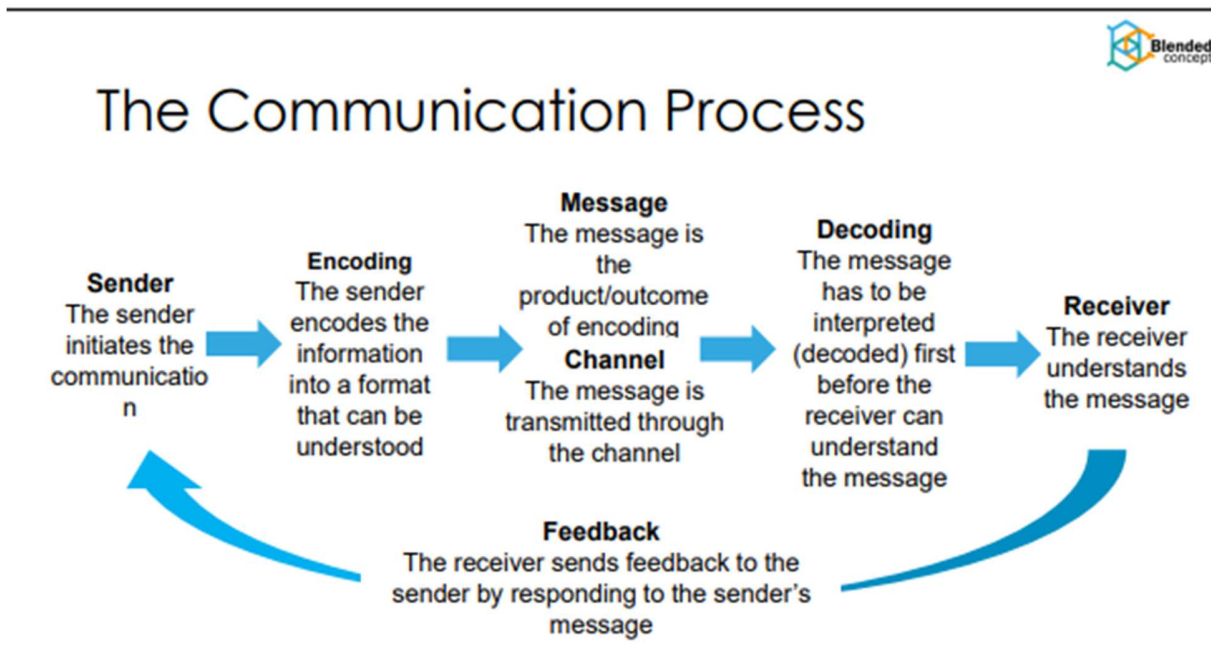
Learning Activity – In the following parts of the session, you will be doing roleplays to hone your communication skills. Refer to the Annex for the OARS checklist to document your learning.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for roleplay activities. It occupies the central portion of the page.

3. Barriers to Communication

3.1 Importance of Communication in Counselling

Role	Actions	Why
<u>Counsellor/ Para-counsellor</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide clients to solve problems. • Explore client's life & feelings verbally & nonverbally. • Understand client accurately. • Show attentiveness. • Clarify client's statements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps clients express themselves clearly. • Ensures counsellor understands client's needs. • Guides effective counselling sessions.



3.2 Types of Barriers

- Para counsellors need to recognise these barriers and overcome them to provide support and engage clients effectively.
- Communication breakdowns can occur at any stage of the communication process.
- In general, there are 5 kinds of barriers to communication: psychological, language, cultural, emotional, and physical barriers.

Emotional	Our feelings can get in the way of clear communication. Example: Someone feeling judged might be hesitant to talk openly.
Psychological	Our thoughts can block communication. Example: Assuming you know what, someone thinks ("mind-reading") can lead to misunderstandings.
Cultural	Different cultures have different practices and expectations. Example: A greeting that's normal in one culture might be surprising in another.
Physical	Our surroundings can make it difficult to talk. Example: A noisy room or lack of privacy can make conversation uncomfortable.
Language	Trouble with the language itself can cause confusion. Example: Accents or unfamiliar words can make it hard to understand each other.

3.3 Overcoming Communication Barriers

Emotional	Calm down before communicating (deep breaths, step away).
Psychological	Challenge your assumptions. Avoid preconceived judgements.
Cultural	Learn about different cultures. Consider how your message might be interpreted.
Physical	Find a quiet, comfortable space with privacy.
Language	Speak slowly and clearly. Use simple words. Show, don't just tell (use gestures).

4. Ethics and Confidentiality

4.1 Value Auction Activity

- Imagine you have \$100 to spend on the values.
- Which value would you spend on and how much?
- What are the reasons?
- How would this be a strength to your clients?
- How could this hinder your work with your clients?
- Share it with your group!

Items	Amount Budgeted
A satisfying and fulfilling marriage	
Freedom to do what you want	
The love and admiration of friends	
Complete self-confidence with a positive outlook on life	
A happy family relationship	
Recognition as the most attractive person in the world	
Long life free of illness	
Knowing if there is and which is the true God	
1 month holiday with nothing to do but enjoy yourself	
Lifelong financial security	
A nice home in a beautiful setting	
A chance to eliminate sickness and poverty	
International fame and popularity	
Success in your chosen career	
Eat all you want without gaining weight	
Guaranteed happiness (never having to be sad)	
Your own private amusement park	
An understanding of the purpose of life	
A world without conflict	
The ability to travel anywhere you want in the world for free	

4.2 What is Ethics and how values influence ethics?

- Beliefs about “what is right.”
- Determines our choices and behaviours.
- But client needs come first!
- We help them to make informed decisions.
- Professional code of ethics is needed.

4.3 Ethical Considerations in Counselling

Consideration	Description	Why it Matters
Self-Disclosure	The situation in which personal, as opposed to professional, information is revealed by the therapist to the client	<p>Potential Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can blur professional boundaries. • Client may feel burdened or pressured. • Shifts focus away from client. <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds rapport and trust. • Provides validation. • Helps client feel less intimidated. <p>When Okay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use WAIT principle (Why, Brief, "I" statements, Client values, Impact).
Transference/Countertransference	<p>Transference: Client redirects feelings/desires towards counsellor</p> <p>Counter-Transference Counsellor's emotional response to client's transference.</p>	<p>Transference</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can help client understand relationship patterns. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsellor must be aware to avoid hindering client's growth. <p>Counter-Transference</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overprotectiveness, rejection, need for approval, seeing yourself in client, inappropriate feelings. <p>Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek supervision if you notice it.
Confidentiality	Protecting your client's personal information and right to privacy by not revealing the contents of the counselling session or that the client is even receiving counselling	<p>Importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client's right. • Protects sensitive information. • Builds trust. <p>Maintaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure appointments & records.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't discuss sessions with others (without permission). <p>Exceptions to Confidentiality (Situations where confidentiality may be limited.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client is a threat to themselves or others. • Court order (e.g., mental health in legal proceedings). • Underage child abuse.
Professionalism	Abiding by industry defined measures to protect the integrity of the counsellor-client relationship, such that the client maintains trust in the role of the professional counsellor	<p>Importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects clients from harm. • Upholds client trust. • Ensures objective counselling. <p>Ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not provide counselling to friends and family due to the difficulty in remaining objective. • Do not provide therapy or conduct activities in which you are not adequately trained in.

4.4 Ethical Case Scenarios Activity

Learning Activity: What kind of ethical dilemmas are they and what can you do about it? Pick one and discuss in your group.

1. David is counselling Mary who is 3 years younger than her. Mary is undergoing marital conflict with her husband. She reveals to David that she wished that her husband was as caring as him. Sensing her distress, David invited Mary out for dinner to make her feel supported in going through her relationship issues.
2. Sarah is a counsellor giving marital counselling to Jenny. Halfway through one of their counselling sessions, Jenny says, "you seem to understand me so much. Did you face such problems yourself?" Sarah says that she did. Sarah goes on to talk in detail about each of the problems she faced in her own marriage and admits at the end of it that she is currently going through a divorce with her husband.
3. You are a para-counsellor. You overhear a counsellor talking loudly to another counsellor about his client in the canteen. The counsellor mentioned the client's name and what happened in the client's family, and you are familiar with the client as well.
4. Jane is a para-counsellor. She has been reading books on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) in her spare time. Her client, Robert, is displaying symptoms of depression. Jane decides she wants to try out what she learnt from her books and offers CBT to Robert to treat his depression.

5. Mary is a counsellor. She learns that her best friend, Karen, is going through a rough period in her marriage with her husband. Having been trained in marital counselling, she offers to counsel Karen and her husband.

5. Reflection of Learning

- You have come to the end of the training. Write down some things that you will commit to in your personal lives moving forward.

You have come to the end of the programme! Thank you for your participation and we look forward to seeing you at our other courses.

If you enjoyed this programme, check out our other courses



Drop us a Google review if you liked what we do!



Check out our social media if you like to know more about us!



6. ANNEX A: Roles of Para-Counsellors

Para-counsellors extend safety net.

Everyone needs counselling at one time or another in his life. From the dawn of human history, people benefited from guidance and advice in one form or another in meeting with and solving problems in their lives.

In Hong Kong, most counsellors work in non-governmental organisations, or NGOs, or are in private practice. Many counsellors are employed as guidance personnel in schools or as social workers in NGOs.

In a (mentally) healthy society, we would like to see people with problems are helped to get the problems solved, and people without problems can be helped to attain higher level of functioning. The need for counselling permeates almost all aspects of our lives. Counselling can serve both ends but we will need more than the professional counsellors to do the job. This is where I think para-counsellors or lay counsellors come in.

Para-counsellors

Para-counsellors or lay counsellors are not professionally trained counsellors. They are people who do not have formal counselling qualifications but who, by virtue of their work, would need to provide some forms of counselling to people they serve. Examples include:

- School teachers advising and guiding their students in matters other than the subjects that they are teaching.
- Policemen helping young offenders to stay out of trouble or when he gives support to victims of family violence.
- Priests helping people to deal with problems in their everyday life in addition to leading them spiritually.
- HR manager helping candidates to make the right career choice.
- Even hotline workers and radio phone-in programme host often play the role of para-counsellors.

So, if we look closer, there are para-counsellors all around us, except they may not know it themselves. They supplement the work of counsellors and significantly extend the "safety net". They play vital preventive roles. In an affluent society, we may need to promote the idea of para-counselling more.

Professional service

Para-counsellors are not meant to replace professional counsellors. It is merely to supplement what professional counsellors do or to help professional counsellors by providing them with a better working environment when their professional expertise can be focused on the "tougher" cases. Advantages of para-counsellors:

1. Availability of people able to provide basic counselling. Important especially in crisis because the para-counsellors are there in their respective communities all the time and they can be readily accessible.
2. Lack of stigmatisation. Many people still experience is still some discomfort when they have to talk to a professional counsellor. They acknowledge they need to see a counsellor, but they will prefer not to tell people that they are seeing one. Some rather turn to their teachers or priests for guidance instead of seeking help from professional counsellors. These people will be greatly helped when the teachers and priests they see are trained para-counsellors instead of merely teachers and priests.
3. Para-counsellors have knowledge about the people they serve, especially when they are the peers of people needing help. As para-counsellors are from the community itself, they do not have problems with understanding the language and the culture of the community in order for them to function well.
4. Healing effect for the para-counsellors themselves. Para-counsellors during the 2004 tsunami became more confident in themselves; cope better with the problems brought by the tsunami; and healed better.

Capabilities count.

Para- counsellors may offer great advantages but we must all be wary of the need to do no harm when promoting or developing para-counselling. This includes doing harm to the para-counsellors themselves. You are all aware of the damage that can be done by someone venturing into helping others when they are not ready.

Para-counsellors are not professional counsellors and should not replace them. Naturally, they will not need the kind of intensive training professional counsellors are subjected to. Yet, they need to master good communication skills and learn to understand and accept others. They need to know their limits and when to refer cases for regular professional assistance.

They need to understand the basic counselling concepts. They need to understand the specifics of any critical incidents their potential clients have gone through so they can analyse the problem and make recommendations or give advice. They need to be experienced and mature enough to be mentally stable and capable of handling stress. Above all, they need to have good common sense. Last but not least, all para-counsellors should have a fair understanding and commitment to upkeep the basic ethics in counselling such as keeping confidentiality.

7. ANNEX B: SOLER / OARS Checklist

<u>Non-verbal Communication</u>				
Technique	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments/Examples
Sitting squarely				
Open posture				
Lean forward				
Eye contact				
Relaxed				
<u>Verbal Communication</u>				
Technique	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments/Examples
Open questions				
Affirming				

Reflecting				
Summarising				

<u>Non-verbal Communication</u>				
Technique	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments/Examples
Sitting squarely				
Open posture				
Lean forward				
Eye contact				
Relaxed				
<u>Verbal Communication</u>				
Technique	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments/Examples
Open questions				

Affirming				
Reflecting				
Summarising				

8. Annex C: Skills Practice Scenarios

LA2.5 Skills practice scripts

Script 1:

You know, yesterday something big happened. I was eating my dinner at the hawker centre, then suddenly the old uncle in front of me choked on his food. His face was turning red and could see he was struggling. When I saw this my first reaction was to feel super scared. This one looks quite serious. I remember last time I attended this first aid course before in school, then they taught us the method to help someone who was choking. I was scared la, but I just run over to the uncle, stood behind him, then pumped against his stomach. Luckily the food he was eating came out from his mouth and he was ok. He thanked me after that. Wa I was quite happy, I managed to save someone's life.

Script 2:

Yesterday was my mother's birthday, so our family went to a restaurant to celebrate over dinner. But the restaurant was quite bad. We ordered our food already, but after half an hour the food still haven't come! I was feeling abit irritated already, so I asked the waiter. He said just a while more it will be ready, so we continued to wait. While waiting I showed my family some funny Youtube videos to watch together so that the time will pass faster and they won't feel like the wait is so long. After another 15 minutes, the food still haven't come. How could this be right? How can the restaurant make the customers wait so long? Inside I was actually very angry already, somemore today is my mother's birthday. But I didn't want to get angry in front of the waiters or make a scene out of it, if not my mother's birthday celebration will be ruined. So I went to talk to the waiter. Finally the food arrived and luckily it tasted good. In the end we joked about this experience and said it will be one of the more memorable birthday celebrations for my mother.

Script 3:

Last week I took bus home from work. While I was walking home from the bus interchange. I realised that my wallet was missing! I started to feel a bit anxious, and remembered that the last time I saw it was on the bus. I must have left it on the bus! I quickly walked back to the bus interchange and told the counter staff what happened, but they told me they will give me a call if by the end of the day any bus driver found the wallet and return to lost and found. I was panicking by then already, because what if someone took the wallet then the bus driver couldn't find it? I told myself to calm down and think of what is the most important thing to do now. I called up my bank and ask them to freeze all my credit cards. I also went to the police station to make police report that I lost my IC. Today I just received a call from the police. They found my wallet. Someone found it! Luckily only the \$5 cash I had in my wallet was missing, everything else was there. It could have been much worse if I didn't freeze my credit cards.

9. Annex D: Roleplay Scenarios

LA4.4 Group skills practice

Scenario 1

Client: You are a 19-year-old boy who just entered the army. You are coming to see a paracounsellor because you are feeling depressed and unmotivated. Your girlfriend just broke up with you to get together with another guy. You don't have the energy or the mood to engage in any of the tasks given to you by your commander. All you are thinking of everyday is when you can book out, go home and just sleep.

Scenario 2

Client: You are a single mother. You are coming to see a paracounsellor because you are feeling stressed and overwhelmed by your commitments in life. Apart from working full time, you need to care for your 1-year old baby and your mother who has dementia. You are also struggling financially. You are often feeling irritated, exhausted, and unmotivated at home and at work.

Scenario 3

Client: You are a 17-year-old student who just entered polytechnic. You are coming to see a paracounsellor because you are feeling stressed and depressed. You did quite well for your O levels, but it seems like you are struggling to adapt to life as a polytechnic student. You are not used to the different style of teaching – compared to secondary school, the teachers don't provide as much guidance, and the workload is a lot heavier. Also, everyone seems to already have their own group of friends except you. You feel lonely and often want to skip school.

Scenario 4

Client: You just started your new job a few months ago. There are a lot of new things to learn on the job, but no one bothers to give you sufficient guidance. Everybody is too busy to pay proper attention to you and make sure you understand what to do. You try your best to google whatever you need to get your job done, but no matter how much effort you put into your work, it seems like your boss is never satisfied. To make matters worse, you just found out that you are being paid lower than your colleagues who joined the company at the same time as you even though all of you have the same qualifications. You are coming to see a paracounsellor because you are feeling stressed, disappointed with yourself, and angry at everybody.

Para-counselling (Basic)

Course Code: TGS-2020504423

Reflection Journal

Name: _____

NRIC: _____

Date of Submission: _____

Signature: _____

RJ2. State the two communication methods relating to para-counselling and explain how you can apply one listening skill and one questioning technique when communicating with clients (A1, K1, K2).

a. State the two methods of communication (K2)

b. Identify one listening skill and one questioning techniques (K1)

c. Apply the questioning technique and active listening skills by writing 1 question that you can ask, and 1 response that you can make which reflects active listening. Write in relation to the verbatim of a client below. (A1)

“My husband is having an affair and I really feel like killing him...I have done so much for the family, and this is how he treated me. And now, my children do not support me because they feel that I have never been involved in their life...but I was posted overseas for 5 years, working hard to feed the family...”

- Question:

- Response:

RJ3 Identify one communication barrier and give an example on how it may affect the communication process when engaging clients (A2).