

Counselling MindEd

In September 2012, BACP – with the support of **Mick Cooper**, Department of Health National Advisor for counselling for CYP IAPT (the Children and Young People’s Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme) – was commissioned to develop evidence-based, e-learning materials to support training of school and youth counsellors and supervisors working in primary, secondary, tertiary and community settings, as well as the independent sector. This project has been called Counselling MindEd

The Counselling MindEd programme is a distinct project that is part of a wider Department of Health programme to develop an e-portal for child mental health. This is led by a consortium of national associations, coordinated by the Royal Society of Paediatrics and Child Health, to develop an e-portal that aims to address the psychological health and wellbeing of children and young people through developing and delivering interactive e-learning programmes and other online resources to extend the skills and knowledge of a wide range of staff – health and non-health professionals (eg teachers, police and probation staff, social workers, faith group leaders and others) – working with children and young people.

Aims

Counselling MindEd aims to produce highly accessible, engaging and outcome-focused e-learning materials for counsellors working with children (5–11 years old), young people (12–18 years old), and young adults (19–25 years old), across a range of education and community settings. Outcome-focused learning describes learning activities that focus on what the trainer hopes the learner will achieve in practice, rather than on the broader issues of the topic.

Our principal target audience is counsellors who have already completed professional trainings in counselling practice, and who would now like to acquire the additional skills necessary to work specifically with children, young people and young adults (CYPYA). The e-learning

materials will provide a high-quality, comprehensive and consistent resource, and are expected to be the ‘go to’ resource for counsellors in the field.

The sessions will be located within the broader MindEd curriculum, and their content will draw mainly from the competences for counselling children and young people currently in development by BACP. The curriculum provides a structure for the e-learning programme and is divided into topic modules, with modules further sub-divided into learning sessions of 20-30 minutes. There is a particular emphasis on developing skills in CYP-centred and evidence-based practices.

Progress so far

The Counselling MindEd programme started in September 2012 and the e-learning resources will be available by March 2014. So far, we have recruited the project management team, led by Helen Coles, Head of Professional Standards; and a steering committee consisting of stakeholders from training and CYPYA service provider organisations, chaired by Nancy Rowland, Director of Research, Policy and Professional Practice at BACP. We have also recruited a lead author, Andrew Reeves (Editor of *CPR* journal), who will be responsible for the team of authors who will write the content of e-learning sessions. Mick Cooper will have overall responsibility for the quality of the contents. We will be working closely with E-Learning for Healthcare (E-LfH), who will allocate Instructional Designers whose role is to translate the content of sessions into e-learning format.

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Scoping research is currently underway to:

- Identify key areas of CYPYA counsellor training that should be addressed through the e-learning materials
- Identify pre-existing e-learning resources
- Develop a clear sense of the target audience for the e-learning materials
- Give the project team a sense of what kinds of e-learning may be achievable through the e-portal
- Help the Counselling MindEd project establish links with key stakeholders in the field, for future testing and refinement of resources.

The completed scoping report will inform the contents of the curriculum that will underpin the e-learning programme. The curriculum will be available to view and is the framework or map upon which the learning modules and sessions are constructed.

How can counsellors gain access to the e-learning resource?

The e-learning materials will be accessed through two existing e-learning platforms – the Department of Health e-Learning for Healthcare and the NHS National Learning Management System (NLMS) – and a new MindEd e-Portal platform being created for this project by E-LfH. Once registered, learners will be able to return to sessions as often as they wish. They will also be able to save and print sessions to discuss with tutors and supervisors. It is also envisaged that a facility to print certificates of successful completion will be available to use for evidence of CPD. Our intention is that the sessions will be recognised as CPD for both the BACP Register and for BACP accreditation purposes.

Access for training providers

We also hope that the sessions will be used by training providers in the field of CYPYA training to enhance existing programmes as part of a blended learning approach. The e-learning resources are not intended as a replacement for training courses, but as a resource for trainers. As part of the scoping for the project, we will be consulting widely with training providers to ascertain how the e-learning materials could be used to enhance training, particularly in evidence-based, outcome-focused work.

Benefits of Counselling MindEd

There are currently very few e-learning resources for counsellors and associated professionals working with CYPYA. The Counselling MindEd project brings together experts in the field of CYP counsellor training, service delivery and practice to provide a resource that BACP believes will benefit counsellors. In particular, there is not yet a resource that meets the need for an accessible, evidence-based e-learning product that covers the life course of the child and benchmarks health and wellbeing of children.

It is hoped that the Counselling MindEd resource will:

- Increase the knowledge, skills and performance of school and youth counsellors and supervisors across the education sector
- Improve the experience of those children and young people who come into contact with all professionals who have used the e-learning resources

- Improve accessibility of children, young people and their parents to information regarding support and provision of mental healthcare.

BACP is proud to lead on the Counselling MindEd project as a means to address the psychological health and wellbeing of children and young people as an investment for the future.

Further details and updates will follow as they become available. ●

References

1 Roth AD, Hill A, Pilling S. The competences required to deliver effective humanistic psychological therapies. 2009. Downloadable from http://www.ucl.ac.uk/clinical-psychology/CORE/Humanistic_Competerences/clinicians_guide.pdf