Summary

Very few high quality e-learning materials were found within the field of children, young people and young adult (CYPYA) counselling training. When aligned with the proposed competencies for humanistic counselling with young people, no existing, high quality e-learning resources were found which directly met the requirements. Similarly, no high quality e-learning resources were found for training supervisors to work within the CYPYA field. A number of resources exist for training counsellors in monitoring and assessment systems, but none were found which could be directly integrated into the project.

Despite these overall negative findings, a number of high quality e-learning resources were identified which could have a positive contribution to the project. Specifically, several high quality online training resources were identified that, while not suitable for direct inclusion, could be drawn upon as exemplars of good practice. These are detailed below with key features highlighted. Additionally, a number of useful resources which could be utilised by the project in terms of ‘links out’ to additional information, or for more ‘client facing’ areas of the project, were identified.
Contents

Overview .......................................................... 3
Search procedure .................................................. 3
E-learning for training counsellors ............................. 3
E-learning resources directly relevant to the project ........ 6
E-learning for training supervisors ............................... 7
E-learning for training in systematic feedback and outcome monitoring .................................................... 7
Public information resources on counselling for CYPYA ................................................................. 8
Summary of recommendations ................................. 9
References ........................................................... 10
Bibliography ........................................................ 10

About the author

Brian Rodgers is a Lecturer in Counselling at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. Until 2012, Brian worked as a trainer and researcher at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, where he also undertook his initial Diploma training in person-centred counselling. During his time in Glasgow, Brian was also a practicing therapist and supervisor, and an active member of BACP. Prior to this, Brian was an IT professional with extensive experience of system design and implementation. He has an active interest in how technology can be utilised to enhance learning, both for counselling trainees and for clients. Brian currently lives in Brisbane with his partner and young family.
Overview

This scoping review was specifically aimed at identifying existing high quality e-learning material for postgraduate training of qualified counsellors and supervisors to work within the field of children, young people and young adult (CYPYA) counselling, and the evaluation of this work. As such, the scoping study was not attempting to undertake an exhaustive ‘breadth’ search of the field, but rather to focus in on field leading examples of what can be achieved. Initial searches identified an extremely broad range of quality in the format of the available e-learning material, from simple online ‘text book’ style learning to highly interactive and informative multimedia resources. Given the time constraints of the study, the search was primarily focused on identifying these latter resources, reviewing the key features they employed and determining their suitability for inclusion within the Counselling MindEd curriculum. Note that again due to time constraints, e-learning for training in child development was not explored, as this is likely to be covered by other aspects of the MindEd project.

Search procedure

A number of differentiated search procedures were used to identify key e-learning resources. To begin with, a combination of the following search terms were ‘Googled’ to allow a broad set of resources to be identified:

e-learning / elearning / online / internet / web / distance / distributed / blended / ‘video assisted’ / ‘computer based’
counseling / counselling / psychotherapy / psychology / psychiatry / ‘mental health’
child / children / ‘young people’ / ‘young adults’ / adolescents / teen / school
learning / training / course / education / module
supervisors / supervision / mentoring / ‘clinical tutor’
‘systematic feedback’ / ‘outcome monitoring’ / assessment / PCOMS

When a suitably promising resource was located, links into and out of the site were explored to identify any relevant interconnected material. Similarly, key research publications were located using Google Scholar, Web of Knowledge and PsycINFO, and their reference lists and citations used to locate further e-learning resources. In addition to this focused search process, collaboration with other members of the project allowed further resources to be located and reviewed.

E-learning for training counsellors

Basic commercial e-learning systems

Within the UK, numerous institutes offer e-learning courses for training counsellors to work with children, young people and young adults. Primarily these commercial e-learning systems comprise relatively simple presentation of online text equivalent to ‘book learning’, simple multi choice quizzes to test knowledge retention, the use of online discussion groups, and submitted assessments to be marked by a tutor.

Though these systems often appear to be distinct courses, they are usually a repackaging of one of the three following courses:

- Level 3 course in Counselling Children and Adolescents (e.g. http://www.distance-learning-centre.co.uk/products/298/COU...)
- Level 3 Diploma in Child and Adolescent Counselling (e.g. http://www.elearning.co.uk/educational-qualifications-elearning-courses/level-3-diplomas/level-3-diploma-in-child-and-adolescent-counselling/)
- Level 4 NCFE Certificate in Counselling Children and Adolescents (e.g. http://www.elearnuk.co.uk/course/counselling-children-and-adolescents)

These courses are typically between 100 and 200 hours of study, and are standard ‘distance learning’ courses which entail text book or online equivalent resources being made available, with the submission of assignments for assessment. Some online tutor/peer support is also available.

A more comprehensive 600 hour Certificate in Child and Youth Counselling course is available via ‘ACS Distance Education’ (see http://www.acsedu.co.uk/Courses/Psychology/CERTIFICATE-IN-CHILD-AND-YOUTH-COUNSELLING-VRE901-736.aspx). This is an Australian sourced course, and though the content of the material is more extensive, the format of the e-learning would appear to be pretty basic. They provide a sample of courses online at http://www.acsedu.co.uk/Info/Enrolment/Sample-Course-Notes.aspx.

This approach to e-learning may be considered too basic for training professionally qualified counsellors to work with CYPYA clients, as it does not engage learners who are used to more experiential and interactive forms of learning. Further, they typically entail the submission of some form of course work for tutor assessment as the primary feedback mechanism which does not fit within the scope of the
Counselling MindEd project. As such, whilst some of the content of these courses may match the likely curriculum of the project, the approach to e-learning would not seem appropriate.

**Higher quality e-learning systems**

In contrast to these basic e-learning systems, a variety of resources have been identified which implement more interactive forms of training, but which do not specifically focus on the field of children, young people and young adults. Though the content of these resources are unlikely to fit directly within the scope and curriculum of the Counselling MindEd project, they demonstrate key features for engaging professionally trained practitioners. The review below highlights the significant features of each resource which could be incorporated into the current project.


This web application was developed to train psychotherapy researchers to use the Achievement of Therapeutic Objectives Scale (ATOS). Nine APA ‘master therapy’ videos can be purchased and rated according to the scale. Trainee’s ratings are then compared to an ‘expert’ rater and learners also see the justification of the expert rater. The web-based application does not include the actual video (which must be purchased and viewed offline separately), but allows trainees to enter a rating of predefined 10 minute video segments according to the ATOS scale criteria. Once rated, the trainee can then compare their scores to those of an ‘expert’. The feedback includes specific justification for why the rating was not higher or lower. (e.g. ‘Not higher because…’, and ‘Not lower because…’)

This approach could be used to train practitioners using ‘master sessions’ with CYPYA clients. Rather than the ATOS ratings, a rating scale could be developed to match the proposed CYPYA competencies/proficiencies framework. Expert ratings and justifications could be provided to help trainees to focus on key aspects of practice.


Unlike the above web application, the e-SOFTA (System for Observing Family Therapy Alliances) application is a downloadable PC program which facilitates a similar process of rating video segments and comparing them with expert ratings. The focus of this system is to facilitate the comparison of ratings of the quality of the therapeutic...
alliance in couple and family therapy sessions. Acted video components are included as part of the programme. This system also allows comments to be included along the ‘time line’ of the video, both by the trainee and the expert.

The added feature this system demonstrates is the expert commentary on the video. The potential here is to include commentary style subtitles revealing the rationale for the therapist’s interventions. These could be provided by the therapists themselves, or by an ‘expert’.

**Reflections in Counselling: https://sites.google.com/site/counsellingdvds/reflections-in-counselling-2nd-ed**

This is an interactive CD, which runs on either a PC or Mac computer, and is designed for basic counselling skills training. It presents a video of the start of a session then provides up to three possible responses which a trainee may select. Once selected, an actor communicates the selected response, leading to different ‘pathways’ of client engagement. At the end, commentary is available on alternative responses that may have been more beneficial for the client. Unfortunately for this specific example, the presented response options are somewhat basic. However, the concept behind the system is quite innovative.

There may be potential to offer something similar for skills training with CYPYA clients, though the acting would need to be very high quality in order to be worthwhile for training qualified counsellors, and the response options would need to be quite sophisticated.

**Open University (OU): http://www.open.ac.uk/**

The OU contains very professionally constructed courses with high quality content contributed by respected authors. There are a number of courses which provide content relevant to working with children and young people, such as Understanding children and young people (Y176), Working with children and young people in trouble (K116), and Working with children, young people and families (K218). However, these courses are not specifically aimed at counsellor training, especially professionally trained practitioners, and hence are unlikely to be suitable for inclusion in the Counselling MindEd project. However, the approach to e-learning provides examples of some key features worthy of note:

- An excellent downloadable ‘module book’ with very high quality content written by respected authors in the field.
- Access to online OU library providing a wealth of further reading material.
- Proliferation of links to high quality external material, such as government websites, mental health websites (e.g. US Uplift program, UK Mental Health Foundation), as well as more ‘social’ resources such as Wikipedia, YouTube videos etc.
- Professionally produced studio quality video and audio recordings with professional actors and/or experienced practitioners. These include first-hand accounts by prominent personalities (e.g. Stephen Fry) of their experiences, as well as other ‘service user’ perspectives.

**Royal College of Psychiatrists CPD online: http://www.psychiatrycpd.org/**

This site provides numerous online learning resources for mental health professionals. Courses with relevance to the Counselling MindEd project include Depression in children and adolescents, Ethical and legal challenges within children’s mental healthcare, Assessment of eating disorders in children and young people, and Behavioural problems in the under fives. These courses are primarily aimed at the medical profession, and hence the content and language of the material is not well suited to counsellor training. For example, the ‘Depression in children and adolescents’ modules begin with an examination of the ‘care pathway for depression using a broad epidemiological perspective’. However, the approach to e-learning is very professional and includes a number of valuable features which raise it above the more simplistic commercial packages reviewed in the previous section:

- Optional pre-module test. This is a duplicate of the post module test and allows a learner to review their a priori knowledge/assumptions at the end.
- Reflective questions (e.g. ‘Before you start, consider the following…’) with the ability to make notes in an integrated online notebook.
- Within the module, links are provided to the details of applicable research papers allowing the learner to independently explore the relevant sources of information used. This approach could be enhanced to allow the learner direct access to the material via an integrated online library (potentially via NHS Athens access), or at least to an abstracts database such as PsycINFO.
- Inclusion of interactive ‘games’ to keep the learner engaged (e.g. One minute memory game to read the past page for 30 seconds, then flip back and have 30 seconds to recall).
- Offer a professional CPD certificate on completion of the module which the learner can download.
- Provide detailed ‘take-home’ notes of the module content that a learner can download to refer to at a later date.
- Inclusion of a feedback form at the end asking if any content needs updating or if anything else should be included that the learner felt was missing.
Each of the above resources demonstrates the potential of e-learning systems to engage skilled practitioners in an interactive way. The incorporation of the identified key features into the current project would likely offer a highly engaging e-learning system for professionally qualified counsellors.

E-learning resources directly relevant to the project

A small number of resources have been identified which meet the criteria of being both high quality and potentially relevant to training qualified counsellors to work with CYPYA clients. Though the specific content is unlikely to fit within the final curriculum framework, they may be of value for inclusion as links to external resource from the project.

Hands On Scotland:
http://www.handsonscotland.co.uk/index.html

The HandsOnScotland website is a resource for people working with or caring for children and young people. It gives practical information and tools to help people respond helpfully to troubling behaviours and to help children and young people to flourish. The site was developed by Playfield Institute in partnership with Barnardo’s and the University of Dundee, School of Nursing. It was initially commissioned by HeadsUpScotland in response to recommendations from the Scottish Needs Assessment Programme (SNAP) report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health (2003), and later with funding via the Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland (2009) initiative. The site contains a large number of resources for addressing issues such as anger/aggression, anxiety, eating and drinking, habits/obsessions, self-harm, sexual issues etc. These include information about the various issues, guidance on what to do to help, quotes from children and young people about the various issues, and some excellent informational videos. This site may be useful as a link for additional information for counsellors, as well as for public information.

Trauma focused CBT Web: http://tfcbt.musc.edu/

This US website provides web based learning of trauma-focused cognitive-behavioural therapy. It was designed to complement other methods of clinical learning, and is free to access after registration. The site includes specific, step-by-step instructions for each component of therapy, printable scripts for introducing techniques to clients, and streaming video demonstrations of the therapy procedures. Whilst the content may not fit directly within the likely curriculum of the current project, the resource would seem to offer an extremely valuable adjunct to the Counselling MindEd project. Further, the ethos of the site seems to parallel that of the current project in providing a rich resource which practitioners can draw on in conjunction with other learning material or taught courses.

Teachers TV and the TES website: http://www.tes.co.uk

Though this website is primarily aimed at teachers, it also includes some very powerful presentations of CYPYA clients’ perspectives. In particular, there are a number of very compelling ‘Teachers TV’ videos of CYPYA client’s mental health issues. Of particular interest is ‘Battling Anorexia’ (http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Battling-Anorexia-6084401/), a 40-minute video presenting the stories of three young people’s experience of anorexia, and how they are helping other young people by giving talks in schools as part of the B-EAT programme (www.b-eat.co.uk). Similarly, ‘Drugs – Breaking the Habit’ (http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/KS3-4-PSHE-Drugs-Breaking-the-Habit-6044030/) presents three young people talking candidly about their experiences with drugs and alcohol, and the impact it had on their lives. As such, it could be a valuable additional resource to include as a link from the Counselling MindEd project.

Professional information websites

In addition to the e-learning resources above, a number of institutional and government websites with information specifically about child, young person and young adult mental health could be considered for inclusion in the Counselling MindEd project. These include:

- UK Mental Health Foundation's pages on mental health statistics for children and young people (http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/mental-health-statistics/children-young-people/);
- World Health Organisations pages on child and adolescent mental health (http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/childado/en/); and
- Australian Guidance and Counselling Association mental health and wellbeing resources for enhancing the capacity of secondary schools to support students (http://mhws.agca.com.au). This site also contains links to a large number of other Australian based resources.

© BACP 2013 E-learning for counsellors working with children and young people: current resources
E-learning for training supervisors

Whilst the scoping search found minimal quality e-learning material for counsellor training in working with children, young people and young adults, there were no online resources found for training of supervisors specifically in this field. What online resources that were found for training supervisors typically entailed using some form of group discussion of case studies. This form of e-learning is not within the scope of the Counselling MindEd project.

The most useful online resource found for training supervisors involved the use of a rating system similar to that of the ATOS training described above.

Online Training for Therapists on DBT Consultation Teams: http://dbt-its.com/

This resource offers an internet-based training system (ITS) to help train peer supervisors. The system uses mock sessions which have been rated by an expert clinician, along with detailed comments and analysis for each rating item. Trainees are then presented with the video of the session and asked to rate the session accordingly. After this, they are able to compare their ratings with that of the expert, and see the rationale for the expert’s rating.

Mock sessions of key presenting problems with CYPYA could be rated according to a CYPYA competencies/proficiencies scale, alongside expert ratings and rationale. These could be used to broaden trainee supervisors’ awareness of issues that may arise in working with CYPYA clients, and offer examples of ‘best practice’.

An intended feature of the above system was to allow ongoing online peer supervision. Real recordings of sessions could be uploaded and rated by the therapist, and then the supervisor could listen to these ratings and give an alternative view. Though extremely innovative, this would be beyond the scope of the current project.

E-learning for training in systematic feedback and outcome monitoring

CORC CAMHS Outcomes Research Consortium: http://www.corc.uk.net

This site is a collaboration of over 70 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) who sign up to collect outcome data and other feedback questionnaires in order to improve service delivery and practice. This includes the U-Promise programme (Using Patient Reported Outcome Measures to Improve Service Effectiveness). The site includes an excellent ‘Resources’ section with some valuable information which could be linked into the Counselling MindEd programme. Specifically, the site includes copies of various outcome and monitoring questionnaires and some excellent training videos about introducing measures and constructing goals with CYPCA clients. The videos in particular demonstrate expertise in using systematic feedback and outcome monitoring in practice, and are professionally produced with YP actors in a believable clinical setting.

OO-AMHS Outcome Orientated Approaches to Mental Health Services: http://www.innovationforlearning.com/LPFT/

This site is a UK implementation of the ‘Heart and Soul of Change’ project (see below). It is part of the Lincolnshire NHS partnership which also hosts the OO-CAMHS (Outcome Orientated Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services) site at http://oocamhs.com/. The e-learning segment of this site consists of a series of narrated ‘Adobe Presenter’ slides with a test at the end. Though the content of the presentations is of fairly high quality, the general approach to e-learning could be more interactive. In addition to this, a number of the video clips used could be more professionally produced – the quality can be very variable and at times difficult to hear. Further, the test at the end is very focused on the specific content and ‘facts’ contained within a module, and can be quite frustrating to complete.
Heart and Soul of Change:
http://www.heartandsoulofchange.com/

This site is the primary source of resources for the Partners for Change Outcome Management System (PCOMS), and Client-Directed Outcome Informed (CDOI) practice. The site hosts articles, copies of measures (Outcome Rating Scale, Session Rating Scale), videos, and a simple online training section. Though the site contains a wealth of information, it is not constructed as an e-learning training course. Further, some resources are only accessible via paid membership. As such, the primary value of the site would be for further reference from the Counselling MindEd project site.

Public information resources on counselling for CYPYA

A number of the resources identified above could also be utilised to inform the public about what counselling is for children, young people, young adults, their parents and other professionals who would benefit from understanding the nature of counselling. For example, the Hands On Scotland site contains a section describing the use of counselling techniques: (http://www.handsonscotland.co.uk/topics/techniques/counselling.htm).

However, one of the best existing resources found was the BACP video for School-Based Counselling, ‘Masks and Mirrors; (http://www.bacp.co.uk/crs/Ethics%20in%20Practice/schoolToolkit.php) This demonstrates a very high quality resource in terms of acting, presentation and direction. Any video used in the project should aim for this quality, as it clearly surpasses most training videos available. The young person actors are believable, with their stories and presentation capable of evoking real emotional responses.
Summary of recommendations

Overall, no existing resources where found that could be directly implemented as an existing e-learning module fitting the likely curriculum of the Counselling MindEd project. As such, it is recommended that the project develops its own customised e-learning modules. However, a number of high quality, online resources were identified which could be drawn upon in the process of developing the Counselling MindEd site. Specifically, these resources could be used to inform the structure and format of the e-learning site, as well as providing additional links to supplement the developed site.

Following is a summary of the key features that authors should consider, which have been found to enhance the usability and value of the various sites reviewed:

- Optional pre-module tests which are repeated at the end to allow a learner to review their a priori knowledge/assumptions.

- Reflective questions (e.g. ‘Before you start, consider the following…’) with the ability to make notes in an integrated online notebook.

- Use of professionally recorded, studio quality audio and video, preferably with subtitles and/or downloadable transcripts for greater accessibility.

- Use of professionally re-enacted client sessions with the ability to rate the quality/proficiency and compare to an expert rater’s justifications.

- Integration of links to high quality external material, such as government websites, mental health websites, as well as more ‘social’ resources such as Wikipedia, YouTube videos etc.

- Inclusion of links to cited research papers, preferably to an integrated online library via NHS Athens access, or to an abstracts database such as PsychINFO.

- Inclusion of interactive ‘Games’ to keep the learner engaged (e.g. One minute memory game to read the past page for 30 seconds, then flip back and have 30 seconds to recall).

In addition to the positive recommendations, a number of recommendations on strategies to avoid where also highlighted from interacting with the various existing e-learning resources:

- Simplistic ‘forced choice’ navigation pathways which restrict a learner from accessing the material they desire. Modules should be accessible in the order and at a time the learner wishes, not artificially restricted by design.

- Multi choice ‘tests’ of narrow content retention which do not contribute to a learner’s overall knowledge retention. Any ‘tests’ should be more broadly contextualised within the overall learning objectives rather than testing the retention of specific ‘facts’.

- Amateur acting and the use of low quality recording. Some resources contained very poor audio quality recordings which can be extremely frustrating. Others contained poor quality acting which was not ‘believable’ in the context of training for qualified practitioners.

These recommendations are consistent with recent e-learning literature. Cicco [1] suggests online counselling training courses utilise course management tools which have a user friendly structure to minimise access issues. Further, she suggests integrating auditory and visual media, interactive technology, and opportunities for engaging in critical-thinking skills. Similarly, Meyers [2] recommends five key areas for the implementation of transformative online learning environments: 1) create a safe and inviting environment; 2) encourage learners to think about their experiences, beliefs, and biases; 3) use teaching strategies that promote learner engagement and participation; 4) pose real-world problems that address societal inequalities; and 5) help learners implement action-oriented solutions. It is my belief that these recommendations offer a sound foundation on which to implement the Counselling MindEd project.
References


Bibliography


Murphy, M. J. et al., Distance education in professional training in psychology Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 2007. 38, p: 97–103.


The Department of Health has provided funding to Counselling MindEd, assisting the provision of health promotion and advice.