

**SCoPEd: A draft framework  
for the practice and education of  
counselling and psychotherapy  
(November 2018)**



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## Welcome to the SCoPEd framework

The Scope of Practice and Education for the counselling and psychotherapy professions (SCoPEd) is a collaborative project between the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), the British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC) and the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP). The aim of the SCoPEd project is to agree a shared, evidence-based, generic competence framework to inform the minimum training requirements, competences and practice standards for counsellors and psychotherapists working with adults.

The draft framework has utilised an evidence-based process of mapping existing competence frameworks, professional standards and practice standards to identify areas of overlap and areas of difference between counselling and psychotherapy.

The results indicate a three-level differentiated competence framework of the minimum requirements for counselling and psychotherapy. The full description of the methodology used to arrive at this draft framework is available.

## The framework

The mapping process identified five themes:

1. Professional framework
2. Assessment
3. Relationship
4. Knowledge and skills
5. Self awareness and reflection.

These themes contained overlapping and differentiated generic competences and practice standards (appendix i) across three levels. The three levels are loosely described as 'qualified counsellor', 'advanced qualified counsellor<sup>1</sup>' and 'psychotherapist'. These terms are used descriptively to avoid imposing existing terminology used by the different bodies, and therefore not an indication of suggested title.

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1 Typically accredited counsellor (BACP) and psychotherapeutic counsellor (BPC and UKCP)

The results indicate a three-level differentiated competence framework of the minimum requirements for counselling and psychotherapy. The competences contained within the framework are written at a high level without the layers of detail associated with meta-competences. This was a deliberate intention, allowing professional bodies and training institutions the flexibility to articulate their own standards and curricula within a shared over-arching framework of generic competences.

Column A identifies the competences that are common to all, Column B evidences competences that are demonstrated by 'advanced counsellor' and 'psychotherapist', and Column C demonstrates the competences that are specific to 'psychotherapist'.

Appendix i sets out the minimum academic levels, training hours and practice requirements associated with each column of the draft framework, drawn from the three participating bodies. It is recognised, however, that although the psychotherapy domain requires Master's level competences as a minimum, many counsellors also hold qualifications at this level or above.

The header column identifies the practice standards associated with each role.

## A note on terminology

Whilst every attempt has been made to avoid describing competences within the framework in modality-specific language, there are certain psychotherapeutic terms which are associated with a particular modality, specifically, 'conscious or unconscious', 'transference or countertransference', 'therapeutic relationship', etc. This created difficulties in standardising the competence descriptors. Therefore, for the purposes of this draft, the Expert Reference Group (ERG) reached a decision not to standardise the language and instead to use language which concisely described the phenomena, for instance 'unconscious' could refer to 'non-conscious', and 'transference or countertransference' could be described as the 'the client or patient's internal experience of the therapist, and with one's own experience in response'. Where terminology has been used that could be interpreted as being modality-specific, this is not the intention.

The one term which the ERG decided to standardise is when the original competency wording referred to 'alliance' – this phrase was standardised throughout to reflect the 'therapeutic alliance'. Furthermore, it is recognised that, at times, the language and terminology within the framework are inconsistent, this reflects how the competences have been derived from different primary sources, and a deliberate decision was made, for the purposes of this draft, to retain fidelity with the original competence wording.

## Theme 1: Professional Framework

A. Qualified counsellor, advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist	B. Advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist	C. Psychotherapist
1.1. Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to operate within professional and ethical frameworks		
1.2. Ability to understand and apply the Equality Act and other relevant legislation to practise safely and ethically within the law		
1.3. Ability to negotiate, maintain and review an appropriate contract with the client or patient, taking account of timing, practice setting and duration of therapy		
1.4. Ability to protect the confidentiality and privacy of clients or patients from unauthorised access or disclosure by informing clients or patients in advance about any reasonably foreseeable limitations of confidentiality and privacy		
1.5. Ability to provide and maintain a secure frame in terms of meeting arrangements and physical settings		

## Theme 1: Professional Framework - continued

<p>1.6. Ability to recognise when to consult with supervisor and (or) other appropriate professionals to address ethical dilemmas</p>	<p>1.6.a. Ability to critically evaluate own work within an ethical framework and apply the framework to resolve complex conflicts and ethical dilemmas</p>	<p>1.6.b. Ability to work with ethical difficulties and dilemmas, including addressing and resolving contradictions between different codes of practice and conduct, or between ethical requirements and work requirements</p>
<p>1.7. Ability to incorporate consideration of client or patient cultural values into ethical decision-making</p>		
<p>1.8. Ability to establish and maintain appropriate professional and personal boundaries in online relationships with clients or patients by ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. reasonable care is taken to separate and maintain a distinction between personal and professional presence on social media where this could result in harmful dual relationships with clients or patients</li> <li>b. any public, online communication is carried out in a manner consistent with own ethical framework or code of practice</li> </ul>		

## Theme 1: Professional Framework - continued

<p>1.9. Ability to manage and appropriately respond to the practical and ethical demands of online therapeutic provision and all forms of technologically mediated communication</p>		
<p>1.10. Ability to use team-working skills to work with others</p>	<p>1.10.a. Ability to take an active role as a member of a professional community and participate effectively in inter-professional and multi-agency approaches to mental health where appropriate</p> <p>1.10.b. Ability to work in multi-disciplinary teams with other professionals to maximise therapeutic outcomes</p>	<p>1.10.c. Ability to take an active role within the professional community locally and nationally. Be able to communicate effectively with other professionals in imparting information, advice, instruction and professional opinion</p>

## Theme 2: Assessment

A. Qualified counsellor, advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist	B. Advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist	C. Psychotherapist
2.1. Ability to collaborate with supervisor and (or) other professionals to decide if a client or patient is suitable for therapy	2.1.a. Ability to undertake a competent clinical assessment that is consistent with own therapeutic approach	2.1.b. Ability to assess and formulate when working with chronic and enduring mental health conditions
2.2. Ability to form a general idea of the client or patient's problems and suitability, in terms of their capability to think about themselves psychologically, and their motivation for therapy		
2.3. Ability to assess client or patient suitability for online therapy		
2.4. Ability to draw upon knowledge of common mental health problems and their presentation during assessment and throughout therapy	2.4.a. Ability to critically appraise the nature of 'psychopathological' and 'normal' functioning and distinguish between them, during assessment and throughout therapy	2.4.b. Ability to understand medical diagnosis of mental disorders and the impact of psychotropic medication during assessment and throughout therapy
2.5. Ability to collaboratively manage the process of referral with the client or patient and (or) other professionals during assessment and throughout therapy	2.5.a. Ability to recognise more significant mental health symptoms and difficulties, and know when and how to refer on	



## Theme 2: Assessment - continued

<p>2.6. Ability to work within own scope of practice and professional limitations and make referrals where appropriate</p>		
<p>2.7. Ability to make risk assessments regarding client or patient's and others' safety, and comply with safeguarding guidance, appropriate to the practice setting</p>	<p>2.7.a. Ability to devise and use a comprehensive risk assessment strategy</p>	
<p>2.8. Ability to assess imminent and ongoing suicidal risk and other self-harming behaviours and recognise when to refer on and (or) signpost client or patient to other sources of help and support</p>		
<p>2.9. Ability to contain clients or patients when in crisis by providing information about self-care strategies and making clear arrangements for future meetings or contact</p>		
<p>2.10. Ability to demonstrate awareness of the risks for both parties specific to the online environment</p>	<p>2.10.a. Ability to identify, formulate and respond to the interpersonal risks that are specific to working online as they impact on the therapeutic process or interact with a client or patient's presenting problems</p>	

## Theme 3: Relationship

A. Qualified counsellor, advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist	B. Advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist	C. Psychotherapist
3.1. Ability to demonstrate an understanding of the central importance of the role and purpose of the therapeutic relationship within the therapeutic approach		
3.2. Ability to reflect upon the impact that diversity (including protected characteristics) has upon the relationship and use this understanding in ongoing work		
3.3. Ability to demonstrate an awareness of how own culture will impact upon the therapeutic relationship		
3.4. Ability to establish and hold appropriate boundaries and create and maintain a collaborative therapeutic alliance		
3.5. Ability to recognise and understand issues of power and how these may affect the therapeutic relationship	3.5.a. Ability to recognise, understand and address issues of power and how these may affect the therapeutic relationship	3.5.c. Ability to negotiate issues of power and authority experienced in the inner and outer world of the client or patient as part of the therapeutic process

### Theme 3: Relationship - continued

	3.5.b. Ability to continuously reflect on and explore issues of client or patient's and therapist's authority and power in the therapeutic endeavour	3.5.d. Ability to communicate about the harm caused by discriminatory practices and aim to reduce insensitivity to power differentials within therapeutic service provision, training and supervisory contexts
3.6. Ability to explore the client or patient's expectations and understanding of therapy and the relationship with the therapist		
3.7. Ability to ensure an understanding of the purpose, nature and process of therapy and the therapeutic relationship, is shared		
3.8. Ability to establish, sustain and develop the therapeutic relationship	3.8.a. Ability to critically reflect upon the client or patient's process within the therapeutic relationship	
3.9. Ability to recognise how breaks and holidays may affect the therapeutic relationship and process, and make appropriate arrangements for clients or patients to seek support in case of emergency		

### Theme 3: Relationship - continued

<p>3.10. Ability to recognise and respond to difficulties and conflicts in the therapeutic relationship</p>	<p>3.10.a. Ability to recognise alliance ruptures and explore with client or patient similarities with other relationship impasses</p>	<p>3.10.b. Ability to demonstrate the skills and critical awareness of unconscious process and ethical understanding, to work therapeutically with ruptures and difficulties within the relationship</p>
<p>3.11. Ability to make professional arrangements in the event of a sudden or unplanned break or ending and communicate the arrangements to client or patient</p>		
<p>3.12. Ability to foster and maintain a good therapeutic alliance, and to grasp the client or patient's perspective and 'worldview':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capacity to recognise and to address threats to the therapeutic alliance</li> <li>• ability to recognise when strains in the therapeutic alliance threaten the progress of therapy</li> <li>• ability to deploy appropriate interventions in response to disagreements about tasks and goals</li> </ul>	<p>3.12.a. Ability to analyse difficulties encountered as part of the therapeutic process to find ways of making progress</p>	

### Theme 3: Relationship - continued

3.13. Ability to clearly communicate about endings with the client or patient and work to ensure these are managed safely and appropriately	3.13.a. Ability to process and analyse the client or patient's attachment style and history of life events when planning an ending	
3.14. Ability to end a session appropriately		

## Theme 4: Knowledge and Skills

A. Qualified counsellor, advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist	B. Advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist	C. Psychotherapist
4.1. Ability to demonstrate understanding, and be able to articulate the rationale and philosophy underpinning therapeutic practice		
<p>4.2. Ability to demonstrate an understanding of the theory and practice of therapy from assessment to ending including knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a model of person and mind</li> <li>• a model of gendered and culturally influenced human development</li> <li>• a model of human change and ways in which change can be facilitated</li> <li>• a model of therapeutic relationship</li> <li>• a set of clinical concepts to relate theory to practice</li> </ul>	4.2.a. Ability to critically appraise a range of theories underpinning the practice of counselling and psychotherapy	4.2.b. Ability to critically appraise the history of psychological ideas, the cultural context, and relevant social and political theories to inform and evaluate ongoing practice

## Theme 4: Knowledge and Skills - continued

<p>4.3. Ability to apply understanding of self-harming and suicidal behaviours, to work collaboratively with the client or patient</p>	<p>4.3.a. Ability to work with suicidal risk and other self-harming behaviours and associated conscious and unconscious processes including the conflictual and paradoxical nature of suicidal ideation</p>	
<p>4.4. Ability to understand the process of change within a core, coherent theoretical framework and adopt a stance as therapist in accordance with it</p>		
<p>4.5. Ability to understand and respond appropriately to the emotional content of sessions</p>		
<p>4.6. Ability to select and use appropriate therapeutic interventions</p>	<p>4.6.a. Ability to demonstrate the capacity, knowledge and understanding of how to select or modify approaches to respond appropriately to the needs of the client or patient</p>	

## Theme 4: Knowledge and Skills - continued

<p>4.7. Ability to demonstrate coherent use of skills and interventions for the benefit of the client or patient, that is consistent with underlying theoretical knowledge</p>	<p>4.7.a. Ability to reflect upon complex and sometimes contradictory information elicited from clients or patients to clearly articulate their core difficulties and possible origins</p>	<p>4.7.b. Ability to demonstrate an understanding and application of the nature and purpose of psychotherapy with a focus on how internal and external worlds impact the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship. This includes an advanced awareness of how unconscious processes (eg transference and countertransference) affect therapy</p>
<p>4.8. Ability to reflect upon own cultural background and history and have the capacity to work authentically in a non-discriminatory manner</p>	<p>4.8.a. Ability to describe the philosophical assumptions that underpin theoretical understanding of culture</p>	<p>4.8.c. Ability to integrate relevant theory and research in the areas of diversity and equality into clinical practice</p>
	<p>4.8.b. Ability to define difference and explore effects of stigmatisation, stereotyping, discrimination and oppression</p>	
<p>4.9. Ability to demonstrate an understanding of the use of audit and evaluation tools to review own counselling work</p>	<p>4.9.a. Ability to utilise audit and evaluation tools to monitor and maintain standards within practice settings</p>	<p>4.9.b. Ability to utilise audit and evaluation methodologies to contribute to improving the process and outcomes of therapy</p>



## Theme 4: Knowledge and Skills - continued

4.10. Ability to understand, assess and apply research evidence to own practice	4.10.a. Ability to critically appraise published research on counselling and psychotherapy and integrate relevant research findings into practice	4.10.b. Ability to successfully complete a substantial empirical research project, systematic review or systematic case study informed by wide current understandings of the discipline
4.11. Ability to communicate clearly with clients or patients, colleagues and other professionals both in writing and verbally		

## Theme 5: Self Awareness and Reflection

A. Qualified counsellor, advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist	B. Advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist	C. Psychotherapist
5.1. Ability to demonstrate a commitment to personal development that includes self-awareness in relation to the client or patient to enhance therapeutic practice	5.1.a. Ability to evidence adequate emotional preparation for intense and complex work, which will require reflexivity and potential taxing of counsellor or psychotherapist resources	5.1.c. Ability to evidence reflexivity, self-awareness and the therapeutic use of self to work at depth in the therapeutic relationship and the therapeutic process
	5.1.b. Ability to work with unconscious processes	
5.2. Ability to demonstrate skills to reflect on aspects of own culture that have most influenced 'self' and understand the relevance of this when working with others		
5.3. Ability to understand the significance and impact of own values, beliefs and attitudes in work with clients or patients	5.3.a. Ability to critically challenge own values and beliefs	
5.4. Ability to monitor and evaluate fitness to practise, and maintain personal, psychological and physical health		

## Theme 5: Self Awareness and Reflection - continued

5.5. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of supervision, with the ability to contract for supervision and use it to address professional and developmental needs	5.5.a. Ability to review and evaluate supervision arrangements and take responsibility for adapting supervision to the evolving and changing requirements of ongoing practice	
5.6. Ability to evaluate learning from supervision and apply to ongoing practice		

Appendix i. Comparison of current training and practice requirements of BACP, BPC and UKCP

	A. Qualified counsellor	B. Advanced qualified counsellor and psychotherapist		C. Psychotherapist
	counsellor	accredited counsellor	psychotherapeutic counsellor	psychotherapist
Length of training	1 year full time or 2 years part time Hours not specified	450 face-to-face hours	450 face-to-face hours Not less than 3 years	500 face-to-face hours minimum (BPC and UKCP) 4 years minimum
Client hours	100	450 (including hours gained during training) Over not less than 3 years	450 (including hours gained during training)	450 minimum (BPC and UKCP)
Academic level	Varied	4 - 7	6	7
Supervision post-qualification	'appropriate'	1.5 hours per month minimum	1.5 hours per month	1.5 hours per month (UKCP varies by modality, but typically 1.5 hours per month)

Appendix i. Comparison of current training and practice requirements of BACP, BPC and UKCP - continued

<p>Supervision in training</p>	<p>1:8 - 1 hour of supervision for every 8 hours of counselling or psychotherapy conducted with clients or patients.  Not less than 1.5 hours per month</p>	<p>1.5 hours per month minimum</p>	<p>BPC: 1:3 - 1 hour of supervision for every 3 hours of counselling or psychotherapy conducted with clients or patients.  UKCP: 1:6 - 1 hour of supervision for every 6 hours of counselling or psychotherapy conducted with clients or patients.</p>	<p>BPC: 1:3 - 1 hour of supervision for every 3 hours of psychotherapy conducted with clients or patients.  UKCP: Usually 1:6 - 1 hour of supervision for every 6 hours of psychotherapy conducted with clients or patients.  Not specified by all colleges</p>
<p>Type of placement (during training)</p>	<p>Not private practice</p>	<p>Not private practice</p>	<p>BPC: Mental health familiarisation: Psychiatric placement experience (generally required)  UKCP: not defined but basic mental health familiarisation must be covered</p>	<p>BPC: Mental health familiarisation: Psychiatric placement experience (generally required)  UKCP: Mental health familiarisation: required but not necessarily via placement. Psychiatric placement experience: some colleges request this</p>

Appendix i. Comparison of current training and practice requirements of BACP, BPC and UKCP - continued

Personal therapy	Not applicable	Not stated as personal therapy, classed as personal development	<p>BPC: Psychodynamic psychotherapist, Jungian psychotherapist or counsellor 200 hours minimum of personal therapy</p> <p>UKCP: 105 hours of personal therapy</p>	<p>BPC: Psychoanalytic psychotherapist, Psychoanalyst or Jungian Analyst 500 hours minimum of personal therapy</p> <p>UKCP: Range 160 -250 hours + (as personal therapy or personal development)</p>
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