



# **A guide to the BACP counselling skills competence framework**

**The competences required  
to use counselling skills in  
a range of different roles  
and settings**

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**T:** 01455 883300

**E:** [bacp@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bacp@bacp.co.uk)

**W:** [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

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Design by Steers McGillan Eves.

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# Contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Rationale for development</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Who is the competence framework for?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>About the competence framework</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>How to use the competence framework</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Applying the competence framework</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Overarching benefits of a competence framework for counselling skills</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Structure</b>	<b>14</b>
Professional context	14
Empathy	16
Skills and techniques	17
Working alliance	18
Personal qualities	19
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>24</b>

## Executive summary

This guide identifies the competences required to use counselling skills safely and effectively in a wide range of professional roles and settings. It describes the advantages offered by the competence framework for professionals, trainers and commissioners, and its applications.

The role of counselling skills is often not clearly defined. It is a term used broadly with no clear remit about the role or responsibilities of those using counselling skills in their primary professional role.

Developing competences for the use of counselling skills to enhance a wide range of primary professional roles is a challenge; but it's a much needed one to improve quality of care, and the safety and wellbeing of both service users and professionals; the cared for and the carers.

The overall message of the framework is to use counselling skills safely and ethically in line with the limits of the associated professional role. Competent use of counselling skills provides the ability to:

- **Recognise** when someone needs to talk
- **Respond** using appropriate skills to facilitate a safe listening space
- **Refer** by sensitively signposting or referring when someone needs further help or assistance

The framework identifies five key 'areas of competence' that are required to use counselling skills safely and effectively in a primary professional role:

1. Professional context
2. Listening and responding skills
3. Empathy
4. Working alliance
5. Personal qualities

In summary, this guide will explain the principles and processes that informed the development of the competence framework and offer detailed information for each area of competence.

Finally, the guide will discuss how the framework can be implemented, whilst promoting and upholding strong professional standards.

## Background

The process of our competence development has historically aligned with Roth and Pilling (2008) methodology, whereby the competence framework is developed through a Systematic Review (SR) of the available research literature, conducted by an information analyst.

In applying this methodology to the development of the counselling skills competence framework, it became evident that the SR carried definitional and logistical challenges and limitations. Therefore, the project team agreed to employ a further research method to supplement the findings of the SR with additional evidence.

A Constructivist Grounded Theory study (GT) was introduced to add authority and allow a more interpretive and critical review of relevant literature. The project team considered that this mixed methods' approach added quality and validity to the research findings.

The final analytic step was to incorporate the opinions of expert and peer reviewers to arrive at the final competence framework.

The counselling skills competence framework is designed to be inclusive; care was taken to balance detail with flexibility to avoid a prescriptive and non-inclusive framework that would not encompass the wide range of professional roles that are enhanced by incorporating counselling skills and values.

## Rationale for development

Counselling skills rest loosely within our *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (EFfCP), with no clarity of role, remit or responsibility. The roles that could benefit from counselling skills span many diverse professions, settings and specialisms and cover a wide range of responsibility, knowledge, skills and ability. Currently there is no commonly agreed standard of performance for those using counselling skills and therefore quality assessment is either highly subjective or non-existent. Without a shared understanding, there can be no appropriate standards and no entry standards for many roles. An evidence-based, expert-informed framework for counselling skills provides a common language, which can be used across professions, specialisms, roles and settings.

A foundation of counselling skills is therefore appropriate for many professional roles, for example: social worker, doctor, police officer or healthcare professional.

As an analogy: most houses have foundations, but they are generally hidden from view. The house itself is what is noticed and there are many different types of house. If counselling skills are the foundations, and all the different houses are the professional roles that can be safely built on them, solid foundations form the basis for safe and reliable houses and professionals!

This framework aims to highlight and value a wide range of roles that offer support, care and assistance in many different places and in different ways. Counselling skills can find a home in all of these roles and by understanding the relationship between the primary professional role and counselling skills, the support and care offered will have an additional layer of quality, skill and safe, ethical understanding. Most professionals will already have the skills, knowledge and abilities related to their role; the framework offers counselling skills and values to enhance the relational aspects.

## Definition

For the purpose of creating the framework, the project team was tasked with formulating and agreeing a definition for counselling skills. The definition went through several iterations until the team agreed and adopted the following:

“Counselling skills are a combination of values, ethics, knowledge and communication skills that are used to support another person’s emotional health and wellbeing. They are not exclusive to counsellors since a wide range of people use them, often to enhance a primary role. Their use is therefore dependent on who is using them and the setting in which they’re used.”

# Who is the competence framework for?

The primary audience for the framework, includes but is not exhaustive of:

- employers
- employees
- educators
- commissioners
- carers and those who are cared for

Counselling skills can be used to enhance many professional roles.



# About the competence framework

The competence framework aims to broadly define the knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours and attitudes needed to use counselling skills safely and effectively within relevant professional roles and settings.

The framework consists of five areas of competence, which can be generically applied to a broad number of contexts. Each of these competences is defined and broken down into manageable components; using language that is clear enough to ensure that everyone has a common understanding of what the effective use of counselling skills means. This common understanding becomes the benchmark against which the performance of an individual can be assessed in education and training and appraised in the workplace.

A competence framework is only helpful if it accurately reflects the professional role in terms of knowledge, skills, experience, qualities and behaviour. This framework is not a tool in isolation. The competences are an integral part of other standards and systems related to the primary professional role.

# How to use the competence framework

The framework can be used:

- to set standards, and inform person specifications
- to identify and clarify aspects of job roles and responsibilities
- to design, develop and evaluate qualifications and training programmes
- for recruitment, staff development and appraisals
- to commission services
- as a reflective tool and for personal and professional development

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## Employment

The competences are generic, adaptable and directly transferable across roles and settings, making them relevant to anyone in a health, social care, support and advice/guidance role.

Interview questions can be taken from the competences. This approach helps to ensure a good match between the role (where counselling skills are part of the role) and the candidate's level of competence both at the point of recruitment and in subsequent performance appraisal. The objectivity offered by evidence-based competences allows fairer decisions around recruitment and promotion.

Many professionals will already have some of the competences in the counselling skills framework. They can cross-check their current skills base with the framework. Gaps in learning and development will be revealed and could form future professional development opportunities.

Not every competence will apply to all roles, and the competences do not replace the need for professionals to meet their own professional role requirements.

The framework responds to the question. “What do people need to be able to do, to be effective in their role?” There are many relational professions that offer help and support to others in a range of different ways. The counselling skills framework offers a common understanding of how to use counselling skills and values to enhance those roles.

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## Training

The competence framework provides a resource for building a qualification with learning outcomes and assessment criteria related to the counselling skills competences. The qualification and training can be tailored by the learning provider to meet the needs of different learning populations.

The framework can also help counselling skills users to think about where they are currently and where they want to be in the future and plan their learning accordingly. Customised training can address learning gaps.

As well as employment and training, the framework is relevant to commissioning. It will support commissioners to have a greater understanding of the nature and use of counselling skills in a number of professional roles and settings. It may also help commissioners to commission an appropriate range and level of services.

# Applying the competence framework

The competence framework includes a wide range of skills and knowledge. Not all competences will be relevant in all contexts. The spirit and underlying elements of the framework are universal. Counselling skills enable professionals to **recognise** when someone needs support and a space to talk; and **respond** to the person's needs. If the person needs help that sits outside of the professional's limits of ability, an appropriate and sensitive **referral** can be made.

As mentioned previously, the areas of competence identified by the framework cover; safe and ethical use of counselling skills, understanding and acceptance of self and others and a strong working alliance meaning that professionals need also to focus on self-care, resilience and professional support and guidance.

The centrality and use of counselling skills as part of another primary role will differ according to the context. What is common is the ability to recognise emotional pain and distress, help an individual/person to talk through their concerns, and be able to respond appropriately within their role.

## Overarching benefits of a competence framework for counselling skills

The framework acknowledges and offers a benchmark standard to a diverse workforce encompassing many settings and roles. This can, in turn, enable employers to recruit skilled and competent employees and support the development of their existing employees.

Counselling skills qualifications mapped to this competence framework will be a strong foundation of learning and achievement for those progressing onto higher level and practitioner level qualifications and training, as well as those taking the skills and knowledge learnt into the workplace.

It will enable the helping professions to recognise the needs of the person being supported in relation to the professional's own role and limits of ability. This will ensure they are able to work effectively, or signpost, or refer to another service such as, counselling and psychotherapy. This will provide a coherent care continuum, whereby people will be able to benefit from care and support tailored and appropriate for their individual needs. Improved engagement, clarity of role and communication will ensure people are able to access personalised and appropriate services and care.

The key benefit is the promotion of emotional and psychological health and wellbeing for those in need and for the general public and society as a whole.

# Structure

The structure of the framework has been kept deliberately simple to show clearly and succinctly how the competences have relevance to and can enhance many professional roles across sectors and contexts. We will now consider the five areas of competence in more detail.

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## Competence one – Professional context

This area of competence is very closely allied to the primary professional role and it is important that the professional context for the primary role is not compromised by conflicting information and values from other standards (including this framework). The primary role is to be enhanced by embedding counselling skills, but not changed. In relation to this framework, there will always be an overarching role and set of professional boundaries already in place.

Legal frameworks apply to most professional work but can vary across sectors and settings.

The legal requirements will cover for example; equality and discrimination, mental health capacities and consent, data protection and confidentiality. People may be members of different professional bodies and follow different ethical frameworks or codes of practice. For example, practising nurses have an affiliation with NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) where there will also be an underlying requirement for safety and appropriateness. This framework will support those ethical frameworks and codes of practice, whilst ensuring the counselling skills' component is facilitated safely with skill and understanding.

Across roles and settings, there is likely to be some conflict or differences in how this competence area is understood and utilised, and it is important that the framework is seen as an addition to a role, rather than a replacement.

Professional boundaries are essential but again will be different across roles and settings. In many situations, someone using counselling skills will also be fulfilling different tasks related to their primary role, and this can be challenging in terms of establishing and maintaining professional boundaries. A nurse, for example, could listen to a patient's fears about a cancer diagnosis and an hour later be taking blood from that patient or serving them dinner. It takes considerable skill to manage the emotional aspects of the working alliance; to provide a warm and empathic space, whilst taking into consideration the situation and aims of the time spent together. At some points the more practical elements of the nurse's role will take a back seat to allow a space where the patient can voice their feelings and thoughts about their diagnosis. It takes skill and empathic sensitivity to know what to do and when.

Confidentiality (and limits) is an area that can also differ across settings and could cause conflict with a person's beliefs, looking through a therapeutic lens. For example, a counsellor in private practice has relative autonomy (within the law) of when to break confidentiality and may choose not to break confidentiality when certain crimes are disclosed. Conversely, other professional roles may require confidentiality to be broken whenever the law is broken or according to agency policies and procedures.

Other policies and procedures in relation to the primary professional role can include assessing and responding to risk and emergency situations. This competence framework supports the need to identify, assess, monitor and respond in these situations.

In relation to the counselling skills interactions, the care and support offered needs to be appropriate. The professional needs to recognise what someone needs and be able to assess whether they have the skills and knowledge required to help them. Part of this competence is the ability to recognise and work within limits of ability, being able to signpost or refer to someone further qualified or experienced, for example, a counsellor or psychotherapist.

Professional support and guidance vary widely across the health and social care professions and across roles and settings. There are many areas where adequate professional support and guidance are sadly lacking, and people are often left alone to work with people who can have complex and challenging needs. The lack of professional support and guidance can lead to a very high staff turnover, which impacts on building trust and working alliances. The lack of professional support can impact on someone's ability to offer care and support. This framework highlights the importance of professional support and guidance, making it a necessary component of working with others. Adequate and appropriate professional support and guidance fulfil a number of roles; they help someone to monitor their own wellbeing and ability to work effectively and safely with others; they also enable reflection on the effectiveness of the work, the working alliance and the use of counselling skills and values.

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## Competence two – Empathy

The nature, application and value of empathy and how this is communicated and developed is key to offering someone understanding and acceptance. Empathy and understanding are closely linked to difference and diversity and both are held within this competence area. Responsivity is also held here.

Responsiveness requires empathy to see and understand the world from another's perspective. Responsiveness is also the ability to identify and respond to empathic opportunity. This framework highlights the importance of knowing when to stay with the primary remit of the professional role and when to offer a listening space; and offers the skills and abilities needed to make those decisions.

It is important to work appropriately and sensitively with emotion, within the limits of personal and professional ability. When working with emotion, there is a risk that the conversation will go 'too deep', leaving the professional overwhelmed and under skilled to manage the situation. Appropriate responses ensure the person feels heard and understood, rather than shut down and abandoned.

Understanding and acceptance are not possible when prejudice and stereotyping taint situations. Assumptions can be made based on the professional's experiences and perceptions but assumptions risk discounting the person being supported from the conversation. Personal and professional development will help to identify and challenge personal prejudice and stereotypes and any worn out beliefs and values. This will enable a professional to listen to who the person is and what they are saying, rather than through the filters of their own opinions.

Using counselling skills with a diversity of persons, settings and situations requires understanding, both of self and others. To work with others requires the knowledge that other people's values, beliefs and principles may differ from our own; and with that knowledge, be able to understand the impact of prejudice and discrimination and also recognise and challenge personal areas of prejudice and misunderstanding.

It is important to retain humility, curiosity and an openness to new perspectives, cultures and ways of being. We shouldn't make assumptions that 'we know already' as it's the individual's experience of their own cultural beliefs that's important e.g. just because we know someone is from a certain religious denomination, or have read a book about it, doesn't mean we know what it's like for the individual before us. This approach to working with others enables an appreciation of their unique cultural, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs and an ability to offer understanding, respect and acceptance. By facilitating choice and supporting people to make their own decisions; autonomy, dignity, choice and independence are promoted.

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## Competence three – Skills and techniques

This competence area has a plethora of terms for similar things – counselling skills, active listening skills, helping skills, counselling micro-skills, communication skills.

This framework offers a list of listening and responding skills with definitions. The list is not exhaustive, and the priority is for the skills to have meaning to the person using them, alongside the ability to offer them in an appropriate and timely manner.

There is an emphasis on using accessible and straightforward language, avoiding jargon and overly complicated terminology.

Appropriate use of listening and responding skills, helps professionals to know what to do, when and how to do it.

There are several counselling skills-based models and approaches but in order to be appropriate and relevant to the wide range of professional roles that could benefit from embedded counselling skills, this competence framework does not include theories or particular techniques or models. It does however, include the core conditions from person-centred theory as outlined by Carl Rogers. Carl Rogers identified the core conditions as: empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence (Rogers, 1957). These conditions of understanding, acceptance and genuineness are relevant and helpful in all human interactions and offer professionals the skills and qualities that enhance the work and enable a collaborative and respectful working alliance to be formed.

Although this framework remains generic to roles, settings and sectors, and is not restricted by any one approach or model, it is important to acknowledge that many roles could benefit from understanding and working within a particular counselling or helping skills' approach. e.g. Egan's Skilled Helper Model (Egan, 1998), Carkhuff's Human Relations training (Carkuff, 1969), Hill's Three Stage Model (Hill, 2009).

It is important to identify and use the listening and responding skills that are facilitative and helpful, but it is also important to identify communication styles that are unhelpful and potentially harmful. Often, unhelpful communication styles require self-awareness in order to understand and challenge them. For example, there may be an urge to give someone advice and tell them what to do, when they show pain, fear or distress. Research shows that these responses aren't helpful but the urge to give advice remains. Through personal and professional support and development, personal patterns of relating can be identified and understood. It could be that someone gives advice because they don't know what else to do and can't cope with their own feelings of inadequacy. Perhaps past hurts are triggered by what someone is saying, and the impulse could then be to stop the person talking to avoid the subject and personal pain.

Unhelpful patterns of relating hinder many professionals from offering a safe and accepting listening space. Both personal and professional development will address and hopefully resolve unhelpful patterns of relating and enable professionals to offer a safe listening space free from their own agenda and needs. Personal blocks to listening can be identified and overcome in order to give someone full attention.

Appropriate use of listening and responding skills will offer both space and structure to an interaction that is neither rushed nor hindered but facilitated to allow appropriately paced communication. These skills are not isolated to face-to-face interactions but should also be applied to other areas of communication. Writing, telephone, text, internet and social media can all be enhanced by the skills and values inherent in this framework.

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## **Competence four – Working alliance**

Working alliance is also known by many other terms, including: helping relationship, therapeutic relationship, support dyad, support relationship. The overall meaning remains the same; one person assisting another. All these terms are allied to a professional role – nurse, teacher, support worker, manager, doctor etc. It is important that the 'working alliance' is in line with the requirements of the primary role and the values of the counselling skills framework.

The working alliance varies tremendously. It can be a relationship with a GP over many years or an interaction lasting minutes with a housing officer and many others. The goals and purpose of the working alliance also vary widely. Care and support can be defined and interpreted very differently across professions and cultures. A police officer and support worker can both use counselling skills to form a working alliance with others, but the alliance would be different due to their different roles. A carer's use of counselling skills to form a working alliance would depend on the people they are working with: their level of personal agency, autonomy and capacity.

The working alliance needs specific knowledge and skills for each stage of the interaction: establishing, maintaining and ending.

All these factors impinge on what sort of working alliance is formed but the underlying message of this competence framework is to keep the focus on the person's wants, needs and abilities, within a respectful, safe and ethical working alliance.

The main focus is on the person being supported but there are occasions where other professionals, carers, relatives and friends may be considered or consulted. The same skills, values and attitudes conveyed by this competence framework, also apply to these interactions.

This reinforces the value of collaboration, both with the person being supported and between professionals, within the circle of confidentiality, through referrals and with friends, family and carers. A collaborative interaction is one where, the action of working with someone, produces 'something'. It's about working with someone to agree the goals of working together and exploring ways of achieving those goals.

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## **Competence five – Personal qualities**

When using counselling skills to support someone, personal qualities and skills are just as important as the actual counselling skills themselves. Self-awareness and personal development are extremely valuable keys to many doors.

Self-awareness is needed to respond appropriately to each unique person and situation. It is required in order to have insight into the situation, the person and oneself and necessary so the person can be offered understanding and support.

Self-efficacy, in relation to counselling skills simply means, knowing what to do and being able to do it (well). This captures the overall spirit of the entire framework. Knowing what to do and when to do it also fall under responsiveness, which requires the ability to respond to someone's changing situation and needs, rather than simply having a set of skills that are delivered in the same way to everyone.

Personal development enhances self-awareness, which enables awareness of when a professional's own agenda, feelings and opinions impinge on their work with others. Personal development also offers opportunities for change and personal growth. Self-awareness will support someone to identify and draw on helpful personal attributes, whilst addressing and working through self-defeating behaviour and patterns of relating. Understanding how personal feelings can impinge on working with others, both positively and negatively, will allow a clearer focus on the needs and agenda of the other person.

Self-care is integral to this competence framework. Working with others can be challenging in many ways, and it is important that caring for others does not come before caring for self. Self-care fosters personal resilience and an ability to manage and cope. Lack of self-care can exacerbate other difficulties. Although stress and being overwhelmed can be seen as personal issues; they do influence working with others. Self-care needs to include professional support and guidance and an awareness of the need for a work-life balance. Self-care is not intended to be a one-time task but rather an ongoing practice of caring and esteeming the self in order to be able to offer care and esteem to others.

## Conclusion

Our competence framework for counselling skills offers a benchmark standard for those whose primary professional role is, or could be, enhanced by using counselling skills.

We recognise the valuable contributions that different professionals make to the wider mental and emotional health of the general population, hence the commissioning of this project. By also clearly distinguishing between levels of competence and ability, it ensures that people receive an appropriate and helpful service.

The development and research phase of the framework was hindered by the differences in language and terminology across settings and roles: helping skills, counselling skills, supporting skills, mentoring skills, communication skills, active listening skills etc. The challenge was, how to provide a framework with a common language that had meaning for all these roles and settings? As a result, the final framework uses simple, inclusive language.

Overall, the priority is to ensure that people receive the support, care and treatment most fitting for their needs; which gives rise to the questions: what does someone need to address their problems and who is the best person to help them do that?

This competence framework responds to these questions by ensuring professionals have the knowledge, skills and understanding to:

- **recognise**
- **respond**
- **refer**

It ensures personalised support and a professional and coherent continuum of care.

The quality, integrity and authority of the competence framework can be enhanced by employers, professional bodies and awarding organisations creating partnerships to further promote and uphold competence.

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# Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). The development process began in 2018. The project team was headed by Fiona Ballantine Dykes (Chief Professional Standards Officer) and Traci Postings (Professional Standards Development Facilitator). Professor John McLeod was a 'critical friend' to the project.

Jessie Emilion was the Information Analyst for the Systematic Review. Professor John Nuttall and Doctor Maria Luca acted as external advisors to the project.

A group of experts in the field met regularly to support the development of the framework. This expert reference group, ERG, consisted of BACP staff and external experts.

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## Membership of the ERG

### **Fiona Ballantine Dykes**

Chief Professional Standards Officer

### **Traci Postings**

Professional Standards Development Facilitator

### **Professor John McLeod**

'Critical friend' to the project

### **Professor John Nuttall and Doctor Maria Luca**

Regent's University

### **Jessie Emilion**

Information Analyst for the Systematic Review

### **Diana Balsom**

Commissioner of Services Dorset County Council

### **Victoria Collier**

Project Manager Skills for Care

### **Doctor Anthony Crouch**

Chief Executive CPCAB Awarding Organisation

**Andy Langford**

Chief Operating Officer – CRUSE

**Faisal Mahmood**

Counsellor and Programme Lead Newman University

We are also grateful to colleagues who commented on the framework and to those who peer-reviewed it.

# Glossary

**Analysis**

Detailed examination of the elements or structure of something.

**Attending**

Responding to verbal and non-verbal cues with understanding and insight.

**Autonomy**

The right or condition of self-government. The capacity to make an informed, uncoerced decision.

**Benchmark**

A standard or point of reference against which things may be compared.

**Blocks to listening**

Things that get in the way of really listening and hearing someone. There are external blocks to listening - noisy surroundings, accents or language barriers, distractions. There are also internal blocks to listening - personal thoughts, feelings, opinions, physical health and comfort etc.

**Boundaries**

Offer safe limits to each encounter with someone. Boundaries provide a framework to work from. They set the structure for the relationship and working alliance.

**GT**

Constructivist grounded theory. A systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the construction of theories through methodical gathering and analysis of data. The theory is literally grounded in the actual data.

**Challenge**

Also known as confrontation, means to gently bring a discrepancy to someone to raise their awareness. It could be noticing someone smiling or laughing when they talk about something very sad.

**Clinical skills**

A discrete and observable act within the overall process of patient care.

**Collaboratively**

Working together.

**Counselling skills**

Can also sometimes be called helping skills, active listening skills.

Counselling skills are a combination of values, ethics, knowledge and communication skills that are used to support another person's emotional health and wellbeing. They are not exclusive to counsellors since a wide range of people use them, often to enhance a primary role. Their use is therefore dependent on who is using them and the setting in which they're used.

**Counselling**

A talking therapy that is delivered by a trained practitioner, who works with people either short or long term to help them bring about effective change and enhanced wellbeing.

**Competence and competence framework**

A cluster of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours and attitudes related to job success and failure. Therefore, a competence framework is something that broadly defines the knowledge and skills needed to be effective within a role or sector.

**Confidentiality**

Keeping something private or secret; not disclosing to others.

**Confidentiality limits**

When working with others, not everything can be kept private and confidential. There are legal limits where confidentiality must be broken including: terrorism, money laundering, drug trafficking. Confidentiality may be broken where there is a serious risk of harm too.

**Diversity**

Variety. A range of different things or people. Understanding that each individual is unique with a unique set of characteristics.

**Empathy and empathic understanding**

The ability to understand the feelings of another. To understand feelings, thoughts, and experiences from someone else's frame.

**Equalities Act**

A law which protects people from discrimination. It means that discrimination or unfair treatment based on certain personal characteristics is against the law.

**ERG expert reference group**

A group of experts in a particular field who form a time limited task and finish group. They generally refine the scope of the work and make recommendations to inform the research tasks.

**Ethics**

Principles that govern a person or group of people. A moral philosophy. BACP's *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* could be seen as a moral philosophy.

**Focusing**

Helps someone to direct their conversational flow into what is most important for them. Enables them to get in touch with the emotions behind the story or narrative. It is a little like zooming into a photograph and seeing a close up of a particular place, thing or relationship.

**Frame of reference**

A set of ideas and beliefs upon which someone makes judgments about themselves and the world.

**Helping skills**

See counselling skills.

**Information analyst**

Responsible for creating reports, researching and analysing data.

**Interpersonal skills**

The ability to communicate or interact well with other people.

**Kindness**

A personal quality that enhances working with others. It is the quality of being considerate, generous, nice and caring towards self and others.

**Limits of ability**

Something that controls what someone is able to do. They are determined by levels of training and experience and competence in a given area, which dictate who and what someone is safely able to work with.

**Listening and responding skills**

Key counselling skills. Listening is a process of selecting, attending to, creating meaning from, remembering and responding to someone's verbal and non-verbal messages: responding skills are communication skills that show interest and understanding in what someone is communicating by careful focusing and listening techniques.

**Motivation**

Willingness and desire to do something. Creates action.

**Peer counselling**

A helping process that involves one-to-one support between members of a group, with a common purpose.

**Peer reviewer**

Someone with knowledge and experience in a particular field who offers feedback on a piece of work or research in that particular subject area.

**Personal qualities**

Personal attributes helpful to support others which include, kindness and care, compassion and consideration, integrity, patience and tolerance and emotional maturity.

**Person-centred**

A person-centred approach focuses on an individual's personal needs, wants, desires and goals so that they are central to the care and support they need.

**Prejudice**

An unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling, usually formed without thought or knowledge. An unreasonable dislike of a particular group of people or things.

**Primary role**

The main role into which counselling skills are embedded: nursing, caring, psychology, paramedic, support work, social work.

**Referral**

The act of directing someone to a different person or place for further or more appropriate help, support, information.

**Reflecting**

Reflecting feelings is determining the feelings and emotions in a person's verbal and non-verbal communication and stating them back to the person. A reflective listener focuses on the feelings in someone's story, rather than the facts.

**Resilience**

The ability to mentally or emotionally cope with a crisis or to return to pre-crisis status quickly. The capacity to recover from difficulties. Toughness.

**Responsiveness**

Timely and helpful responses that acknowledge and meets someone's wants and needs. The quality of responding quickly and positively.

**Self-awareness**

Conscious knowledge of one's own character and feelings.

**Self-care**

The practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health. Protecting one's own wellbeing and happiness.

**Stereotype**

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea about a particular category of people. Generalisations that prejudge who someone is based on certain characteristics, for example, race, gender, sexuality.

**Summarising**

Bringing together all the threads of an interaction into a single statement that covers the content of what has been said; especially useful at the end of a period of time with someone. It condenses the main points of a conversation, giving someone the opportunity to listen and recap.

**Supervision and supervisory support**

Showing and giving support to someone to help them progress in their work and feel valued and comfortable. It develops good practice in the workplace, builds skills and knowledge and builds a collegiate relationship. The person offering supervision, generally has more knowledge and experience than the person they are supporting.

**Systematic Review**

A type of literature review that uses systematic methods to collect and critically appraise data, followed by synthesising findings quantitatively or qualitatively. They are designed to provide a whole picture of a given subject or question through existing evidence.

**Unhelpful responses**

Responses that hinder rather than support someone's wellbeing. Unhelpful responses include interrupting and talking over, giving advice and telling someone what to do, overuse of questions, rescuing etc.

**Working alliance**

The relationship formed when working with or supporting someone. It is important to develop an effective bond and to set out the boundaries and limits of the relationship as well as establishing the tasks and goals of the work.