

### **Third Sector Organisation delivering Counselling in Scottish Schools**

Complete data on the number of third sector organisations involved in the delivery of counselling in Scottish schools is not currently available. Below is a list of some of the agencies that have been identified by COSCA as having some involvement in the delivery of counselling services and/or mental wellbeing services in Scottish schools. The organisations numbered 1-5 below are member organisations of COSCA.

1. The Spark (national counselling agency with a number of different contracts)
2. Relationships Scotland's local services e.g. Brightlight Relationship Counselling (based in Edinburgh); Couple Counselling Central Scotland (based in Falkirk)
3. Wellbeing Scotland (Clackmannanshire)
4. Crossreach
5. Voluntary Service Aberdeen
6. Lifelink, Royston Stress Centre
7. Counselling Care Skye & Lochalsh
8. Headroom4u (Fife)
9. RAMH
10. Place2Be
11. Action for Children
12. Children 1<sup>st</sup>
13. MCYP Counselling (Midlothian)
14. MYPAS (Midlothian)

In addition, there are some COSCA member organisations in the private sector who are involved in the delivery of counselling in schools. Two of these are Rowan Consultancy and Direction.

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## **Training for Counselling Children and Young People**

This publication is intended to provide a brief response to some of the issues that arise for people considering training for counselling children and young people in Scotland. It is in the form of answers to 11 frequently asked questions.

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### ***Q1 What is youth counselling?***

Youth counselling is a term used to describe both counselling and psychotherapeutic support to assist children and young people to address and overcome developmental challenges, psychological obstacles and traumatic life experiences - promoting self-belief, enhancing self-insight and building resilience. A client-centred therapeutic dialogue is offered within a non-judgemental relationship, where the well-being of the young person is paramount and their agenda is central.

This is a contractually agreed relationship that is voluntarily entered into by both the client (young person) and an appropriately trained and supervised counsellor. It is offered within clearly defined parameters and underpinned by a professional code of ethics and practice for counsellors.

The offer of forms of psychotherapeutic support will be contractually agreed with the young person or their carers. Wherever possible the consent of the recipient is sought for any support activity offered. Psychotherapeutic support may be particularly appropriate for young children or those without the verbal skills to engage in counselling. Drama, play, music and art therapy are all examples of this approach. Practitioners will be appropriately trained and supervised and work within a professional code of ethics.

## ***Q2 How does youth counselling differ from counselling adults?***

The same rigorous application of standards and codes of ethics should apply for counselling young people as it does for adults.

However, it is also generally recognised that engaging in counselling work with children and young people will present significant differences from counselling adults. All therapeutic work should be within a Young Persons' Rights framework.

Boundaries around responsibility and accountability may be less clear cut and will be significantly affected and maybe challenged by working contexts which may impose contractual obligations around sharing information, note-taking and policies, for example, on child protection and drug abuse.

Counsellors need to be aware of issues of legal responsibility in, for example, confidentiality, consent and human rights.

Liaison with other interested and concerned parties including parents and referral agencies may be an important part of the work, and many counsellors may be expected to work systemically, offering group work to selected client groups and feedback to organisations. Another significant difference which counsellors may need to address is that, living in the family or institutional structure, young people may hold very little actual power in terms of choice and possibilities for change.

Counselling young people may mean working with some of the **most** vulnerable members of our society. The client group are more likely to present in highly charged emotional states and it is possible to encounter high risk problems such as suicide and self harm. Resistance to engage in the process is not uncommon. Counsellors may have to overcome issues around accessibility of counselling including practical environmental issues as well as emotional and developmental issues of young people.

Counsellors have to face issues around limitations to counselling competences and expertise and the need for assessment and referral. When working with young people, the need for consultancy and advice in areas like mental health problems and confidentiality is required in addition to supervision.

Consequently, the counsellor's knowledge base has to be quite wide and include knowledge about the nature of childhood, adolescence and emerging identity, cultural influences and anti-discriminatory practice in relation to all young people. It is also important to be able to assess the impact of age, ability and other factors on maintaining a confidential relationship with young people.

Youth counsellors need to be able to keep young people at the centre of their work and therefore need to have considerable affinity in relating to young people, as well as expertise in counselling.

### ***Q3 What training is needed to counsel children and young people?***

Youth counsellors need training in three main areas:

1. Counselling skills training
2. Core training in counselling

This must cover the following:

- ❑ Human growth and development
- ❑ Theory, theorists and other therapeutic traditions
- ❑ The therapeutic relationship
- ❑ Psychopathology

3. Training in specialised youth issues and the application of counselling to these areas. These include adolescent development, youth culture, confidentiality and increasingly, mental health issues.

An understanding of specific contexts where counselling is delivered is also important, e.g. school counselling or community counselling.

The most commonly followed course into youth counselling is through a course in counselling skills followed by a diploma or other advanced level course in counselling training with an additional specialist module in youth counselling. Modules in youth counselling can be obtained from various sources including in-house training from youth counselling organisations.

Some courses may incorporate all of these three strands, e.g. a specialised diploma or other advanced level course in psychotherapeutic work with young people which may encompass art and play therapies. This route is less common because of the shortage of courses, especially in Scotland.

A popular route to youth counselling, because of its flexibility and accreditation of prior learning, is through a combined route. A variety of different counselling trainings and relevant academic study which together amount to the equivalent of a longer diploma or advanced level course can be undertaken over a period of many years.

Practitioners can also build on previous study and experience of working with young people which included relevant skills and theoretical underpinning of knowledge applicable to counselling. This may include youth and community workers, social workers, teachers, nurses and psychologists who may want to become counsellors. Many practitioners use their prior learning to gain access to counselling posts where they receive additional training on youth counselling.

All routes require evidence of supervised practice of client work before counsellors can apply for accreditation as counsellors.

#### ***Q4 What is accreditation and how is this achieved?***

COSCA, Scotland's professional body for counselling and psychotherapy in Scotland, aims to maintain standards of qualifications, training and practice in counselling and psychotherapy. COSCA, therefore, has developed a system of accreditation of counsellors and psychotherapists, underpinned by its Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice. The key purpose of Accreditation is to provide an assurance to the general public that a counsellor/psychotherapist has been assessed and deemed to have attained a mature, professional, competent, safe and ethical standard of practice.

The Accreditation process requires counsellors/psychotherapists to evidence:

1. Core training and theoretical knowledge
2. Supervised practice with clients.
3. Counselling practice, including the ability to assess and refer.
4. Working within the COSCA (or equivalent) Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice
5. Continuing professional development (CPD)

**Q5 How can I be sure the course I am following will count towards accreditation?**

There are two routes to accreditation:

1. Diploma route
  - Candidates must have achieved a COSCA, or equivalently validated Diploma in Counselling or Psychotherapy.
2. Combination Route
  - Candidates must have achieved a combination of core training and practice. Core training must cover specific aspects of theoretical knowledge.

Please see the COSCA Website [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) for full accreditation details and criteria.

**Q6 What is involved in youth counselling training?**

Youth counselling courses vary greatly in content, assessment and duration. These variations are often a feature of the service providing the course so it is important to consider the content and focus of the course before deciding on a particular course.

As a general guide, trainees can expect:

- Counselling theory, in relation to young people. This may be where there are greatest variations with some courses adhering to specific counselling theories and others taking a more integrative approach.
- A component of self-awareness training which will probably involve reflection on personal experiences during adolescence.
- Skills practice development in relation to young people
- A specific focus on youth issues and contexts where counselling is delivered. This may mean concentrating on issues like drug abuse, mental health, bullying, peer relationships, and referencing boundary issues like confidentiality and referral.

**Q7 What questions should I ask about training courses?**

As most counsellors will have to take an initial generic counselling course, these questions may help trainees decide on the suitability of the courses:

- What is the course content and how much of it will be relevant to working with young people?

- Does the training course require trainees to enter into their own supervision, independent of placement and therapy?
- How many client practice hours are required to complete the course?
- Will there be help in finding placements for working with young people?
- What is their evidence/assessment /reflective practitioner framework and how does it relate to work with young people?
- Are there creative elements to the course that would be especially useful for working with young people?
- How much will they cost and what is the completion rate?

***Q8 What is a counselling placement?***

Counsellors in training are required to undertake a certain number of supervised practice hours, usually within an established service with a counselling provision. This can be a youth counselling service.

***Q9 What qualifications and experience do I need to gain entrance to youth counselling training?***

This depends on which route you take.

Some agencies who work with volunteer counsellors will train people from the basics onwards.

Initially, you will need training in counselling or another related helping discipline to undertake training which could contribute to the combined route.

A good grounding in basic counselling skills is an important requisite of all diploma and advanced level courses.

No formal qualifications are required but obviously a commitment to working with young people is important. You should expect an in-depth interview with regards to your suitability for counselling. You may also be required to attend an interview to consider your suitability for counselling, level of self-awareness and openness to personal development as well as ability to cope with the academic and emotional demands of the course.

**Q10 Are there any steps I should take to prepare for youth counselling training, work experience and placements?**

It helps to have experience of working with young people or to have attended short courses on youth issues such as mental health, substance abuse, peer pressure, self- image, leaving home, self-harm etc.

**Q11 Where can I find employment as a youth counsellor?**

Youth counsellors are employed in a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private services.

Although some counsellors are employed in specialised youth counselling services, the majority will find employment in other services which are not specifically focussed on youth counselling.

Some of these services are specifically set up for young people like Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services; others are integrated into wider service provision, e.g. Young Persons Sexual Health Clinic.

The following areas are examples of services that may employ counsellors:

- Schools, colleges and universities
- Youth and community services
- Social care services
- Youth justice
- Health services
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Advice and Guidance Centres
- Crises services

Rates of pay are notoriously variable and often depend on the service employing the counsellor and the way any counselling post is funded.

In the voluntary sector, many services are dependent on volunteer counsellors who are unpaid, e.g. ChildLine. (However, these services often provide excellent routes for acquiring training, supervision and useful expertise)

A few counsellors elect to work in private practice.

COSCA

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## **COMPETENCIES FOR COUNSELLING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Guidelines for Training Organisations, Practitioners and Trainees**

#### **Introduction**

This guidance, endorsed by COSCA's Counselling Children and Young People Work Group and COSCA's Policy Board, provides information on the competencies expected by COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) of counsellors and psychotherapists working with children and young people.

The competencies listed in this guidance are offered to training organisations, practitioners and trainees to enable them to know and understand what is involved in counselling children and young people competently. Underpinning this guidance is the following description of the counselling task:

*"Counselling is a contractually agreed relationship that is voluntarily entered into by both the client and an appropriately trained and supervised counsellor. It is offered within clearly defined parameters and underpinned by a professional code of ethics and practice for counsellors.*

*Counselling and psychotherapy can assist children and young people to address and overcome developmental challenges, psychological obstacles and traumatic life experiences. They can promote self-belief, enhance self-insight and build resilience. They offer a client-centred therapeutic dialogue within a non-judgemental relationship where the well-being of the young person is paramount and his/her agenda is central."*

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) 2004

Further guidance on establishing and delivering counselling and psychotherapy services to children and young people can be found in COSCA's publication: Establishing Counselling Services for Children and Young People: COSCA Guidance on Good Practice and the Law in Scotland.

Organisations delivering training courses in counselling children and young people are encouraged to apply for COSCA Course Validation using our specialist application form and guidelines. For further information please see COSCA's website under validation/specialist courses. [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk)

## **PART I: PRINCIPLES AND OVERALL AIMS**

### **1. Principles**

Training in counselling with children and young people should enable any trained practitioner, in any orientation, to undertake counselling with a child or young person competently. All trainings should be consistent with COSCA standards and guidelines, including the competencies outlined within this document.

### **2. Overall aims**

- 2.1 Counselling with children and young people differs from that with adults in certain respects. Training organisations must have a separate set of guidelines, a specific curriculum to meet the different needs of these client groups and training must be subjected to separate assessment by the training or accrediting organisation.
- 2.2 The intention of these guidelines is to create a framework for trainings that is flexible and can encompass the different orientations within counselling, whilst providing a sound basis for good practice. In all cases, the trainee will be expected to demonstrate sufficient understanding of human development and of the nature of counselling with children and young people; to be able to locate this within the wider context of working with children and young people within different sectors and disciplines; and to be able to practice counselling with children and young people in an appropriate range of settings and contexts.
- 2.3 The trainee should acquire a sound understanding of the particular dynamics and practical issues involved in therapeutic work with children and young people in different settings, and the associated ethical and legal issues.
- 2.4 The onus is upon the Training Organisation to demonstrate the means by which the curriculum and assessment of trainees will achieve learning outcomes to match these aims, including any unique characteristics of a particular orientation. These guidelines are intended to apply to full trainings in counselling with children and young people, but will also have application to shorter courses intended to build on prior trainings eg in working with adults or in other professional areas.
- 2.5 Training Organisations should also have specific Ethical Guidelines and Codes of Practice relating to counselling with children and young people to which all those accredited on the basis of these trainings will be expected to adhere. All training organisations will be expected to adhere to the codes of practices and ethics set out by COSCA.

### **3. Principles for Trainings in Counselling with Children and Young People:**

These principles recognise:

- 3.1 the child or young person's individual human rights, including the right to self-determination, within the reasonable constraints of their needs for safety, protection and care. These should take into account the law relating to child protection, guidelines for vulnerable and young people and the rights of parents and carers
- 3.2 the child or young person's resilience, given the right support and conditions
- 3.3 the importance of considering the experience of children and young people in the overall context of their lives (section 5).
- 3.4 the right of the child or young person to respond to the circumstances of their lives as best they can, even where this manifests in ways that present challenge and difficulty in the adult world

- 3.5 the particular dependency and vulnerability of the child or young person, emotionally, physically, psychologically and spiritually
- 3.6 the child or young person's position in relation to the world, and the effects of family, social, cultural, religious/spiritual and political systems which frame the reality of their lives
- 3.7 the need to support children and young people in developing the skills and resources to deal realistically with the circumstances of their lives, as well as to fulfil their potential and build trust
- 3.8 the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue and exploration

## **PART II: Generic Learning Outcomes for Trainings in Counselling with Children and Young People**

### **4. Knowledge and Understanding**

The trainee will be expected to be able to:

- 4.1 demonstrate a sound knowledge of the developmental stages of infancy, childhood and adolescence and the different needs and experiences of children and young people at particular stages in their development.
- 4.2 demonstrate a good understanding of the psychological and relational tasks of human development
- 4.3 demonstrate an understanding of the theory and skills of counselling with children and young people, within the orientation they are studying, against an overall historical and critical perspective on the development of therapeutic work with children
- 4.4 have an understanding of the principles of adult counselling, and how this affects work with young people who may be on the brink of adulthood, or the adults who form part of the child's world, including the counsellor her or himself
- 4.5 demonstrate the ability to use resources for learning
- 4.6 recognise serious mental illness in children and young people, and in adults, as this impinges on children's lives
- 4.7 formulate an understanding of assessment, confidentiality and therapeutic intervention as it relates to the orientation within which the student is training
- 4.8 develop an awareness of the range and continuum of special educational needs and how these may present specific challenges to the counsellor in establishing an effective therapeutic relationship (section 6)
- 4.9 be able to identify and consult with appropriate professionals who can assist in the assessment of suitability of certain therapeutic practices for children with specific needs or disabilities; be aware of the potential limitations of her or himself in relation to work with children manifesting specific disabilities or special educational needs (section 6)
- 4.10 demonstrate a general level of understanding of other major models and approaches to therapeutic work with children and young people.
- 4.11 demonstrate an understanding of the effects of psychological trauma, neglect, sexual and physical and emotional abuse and how these manifest themselves
- 4.12 develop an ability to understand and evaluate research methods relevant to all models of counselling with children and young people, and critiques of evidence-based research
- 4.13 be aware of the importance of keeping up to date with therapeutic techniques with children, parents and families (section 9)

- 4.14 demonstrate an understanding of family and cultural dynamics (section 7)
- 4.15 demonstrate an understanding of the role and involvement of education, social services, health services and other public service sectors, the implications of these for therapeutic work and the role of inter-disciplinary working in different contexts (section 13)
- 4.16 demonstrate a sound knowledge of Child Protection procedures and guidance, the legislative framework relating to children, the ethical issues involved relating to safety and well-being of the child or young person, and to boundary issues and confidentiality
- 4.17 develop a practical knowledge of special procedures in the settings within which the work is undertaken (eg statementing for special needs)
- 4.18 demonstrate an awareness of the issues relating to the use of medicines in the mental health treatment of children (eg where there is a diagnosis of ADHD)

## **5. The Child or Young Person in Context**

The trainee will be expected to be able to:

- 5.1 develop an understanding of how children function in the various contexts of their lives
- 5.2 demonstrate an understanding of family dynamics and other interactions which impinge upon the child.
- 5.3 demonstrate a knowledge of specific skills and approaches related to working with children of particular age-groups, or special characteristics which will form the core of his or her practice
- 5.4 be able to work constructively with parents, carers and other relevant adults for the good of the child or young person
- 5.5 demonstrate understanding of the particular power dynamics and relational issues involved in working with children and young people, including an appreciation of issues relating to transference and counter-transference (or alternative formulations corresponding to different orientations)
- 5.6 demonstrate a capacity to analyse the impact of the role and involvement of other agencies or individuals, and the implications of this in particular settings
- 5.7 demonstrate an awareness of, and sensitivity to, prejudice; show an ability to respond openly and appropriately to issues of race, gender, age, sexual preference, class, disability, and ethnic, spiritual/religious and cultural difference (section 7).
- 5.8 show a willingness to acknowledge the limitations of his or her own knowledge and experience, and to retain flexibility and creativity in formulating interventions or responses

## **6. Mental ill health and physical ill health**

The trainee will be expected to be able to:

- 6.1 promote the health of children and young people, where appropriate
- 6.2 identify and support those children and young people experiencing, or at risk of mental health problems
- 6.3 understand the impact of stress on children or young people and those around them
- 6.4 work with children and young people who have physical as well as emotional or psychological problems
- 6.5 work collaboratively with other health professionals

## **7. Diversity**

The trainee will be expected to be able to:

- 7.1 demonstrate a thorough understanding of the issues of diversity and equal opportunities
- 7.2 understand the impact of cultural context on the child or young person, and the impact of the counsellor from a different cultural context

## **8. Therapeutic skills**

The trainee will be expected to be able to:

- 8.1 assess clients for suitability for their chosen orientation/approach, and justify the decision to offer to undertake counselling with a child or young person
- 8.2 identify indications of deeper disturbance or areas of specialist need that cannot be addressed within the orientation being practised or in the setting in which the work is being offered
- 8.3 negotiate appropriate contracts and boundaries with all parties concerned
- 8.4 establish and work with a therapeutic relationship congruent with the chosen orientation and the level of intensity of the work being offered
- 8.5 demonstrate specific skills relating to working with children of particular age-groups or special characteristics, needs or disabilities which will form the core of the counsellor's practice
- 8.6 demonstrate skills in communicating and establishing relationships with children at a range of age-levels, working with parents and children, with families, or with other parties involved, as appropriate to the settings for the work (section 13)
- 8.7 understand the child's need to be able to express feelings, thoughts and beliefs in the context of a safe and secure environment
- 8.8 establish and maintain a therapeutic alliance, manage change and appropriate endings, including breaks and holidays
- 8.9 develop a capacity for reflecting on one's own process in relation to working with children, through an appropriate combination of personal enquiry, experiential work and supervision
- 8.10 engage in appropriate placements within the specific training curriculum

## **9. Continuous Professional Development**

The trainee will be expected to be able to:

- 9.1 critically reflect on therapeutic process and on his or her own practice.
- 9.2 have a realistic appreciation of the value and limits of the chosen therapeutic approach, of the counsellor's own capabilities and to be able to refer to other resources as required.
- 9.3 explore the political and social context of counselling
- 9.4 demonstrate continuing professional development

## **10. Use of Supervision**

The trainee will be expected to be able to:

- 10.1 demonstrate regular on-going supervision, and to appreciate the particular supervisory requirements for therapeutic work with children
- 10.2 prepare for and make effective use of supervision appropriate to the context, specialisation offered and the work being undertaken, with a supervisor who has greater experience of therapeutic work with children or extensive relevant skills and a background of relevant experience with children
- 10.3 identify, clarify, assess and manage resolution of most therapeutic problems with support from supervision.

## **11. Communication and Presentation**

The trainee will be expected to be able to:

- 11.1 engage confidently and respectfully in appropriately professional communication with others involved in the life of the child or young person
- 11.2 present their work for discussion and mutual learning in the context of others who are also undertaking therapeutic work with children

## **12. Working with others**

The trainee will be expected to be able to:

- 12.1 negotiate and handle conflict confidently and respectfully, whether with children and young people, parents, teachers and/or other professionals
- 12.2 work co-operatively with others within the reasonable boundaries of the agreed therapeutic contract
- 12.3 work effectively with counselling groups and/or with other counsellors or other professionals
- 12.4 handle consultations with family members or other interested parties
- 12.5 to have a realistic appreciation of the value and limits of the chosen therapeutic approach, and of appropriate indicators for referral

## **13. Professional setting and Management skills**

The trainee will be expected to be able to demonstrate:

- 13.1 awareness of the setting in which therapeutic work with children and young people takes place, and of the need to hold boundaries against challenge ( e.g. confidentiality, privacy, lack of disruption, dedicated space and time-tabling)
- 13.2 for those trainees who are likely to be working within or closely with the education system, an understanding of the specific social contexts of the primary, secondary and special schools; of the challenges that teachers and support workers face; and the importance of the counsellor establishing good liaison and working relationships in the interest of appropriate referral, attendance at sessions and confidentiality.
- 13.3 ability to adapt the approach as necessary for the good of the child or young person
- 13.4 awareness of the need to assess what might not be possible in a particular professional setting
- 13.5 awareness of boundary issues, including confidentiality, in specific settings and in relation to the particular obligations relating to counselling with children and young people
- 13.6 a capacity to handle complex and unpredictable situations as they arise

- 13.7 an ability to understand and agree contracts between the child or young person, the school/parents and/or other professionals
- 13.8 an ability to manage the dynamics and role relationships within different organisational settings,
- 13.9 an understanding of professional relationships within and between professional teams and in multi-disciplinary settings where appropriate
- 13.10 an understanding of systems of referral (policies, criteria and processes and motivation for referral) in different settings and an ability to take responsibility within this area
- 13.11 an ability to promote the counselling service, manage the counselling service and make contracts if necessary
- 13.12 the capacity to undertake routine evaluation of counselling

#### **14. Responsibility**

The trainee is expected to be able to demonstrate:

- 14.1 autonomy in professional practice
- 14.2 responsibility for self-monitoring including the appropriate use of supervision (section 10)
- 14.3 awareness of particular issues and procedures relevant to the professional practice of counselling with children and young people

#### **15. Ethics**

The trainee should be able to formulate the general ethical principles and value base for working with children and young people within their chosen orientation, and to show how this relates to the overall principles formulated within the COSCA Principles outlined above. They should be able to demonstrate the practical application of these principles through their adherence to the specific ethical guidelines and codes of practice of their particular training organisation and orientation.

The trainee will be expected to be able to demonstrate:

- 15.1 awareness of the ethical, professional and practice responsibilities of being a counsellor working with children and young people
- 15.2 awareness of and ability to manage the implications of the particular ethical issues and dilemmas relating to work with children and young people in the particular contexts within which the work is being undertaken (section 13)
- 15.3 a recognition of the child or young person's right to confidentiality and self-determination in the context of the complementary right of care and protection, and the parental right in relation to decisions about their child
- 15.4 an awareness of the ethical issues and multi-disciplinary implications of the use of medicines in relation to the mental health treatment of children and young people (section 6)
- 15.5 a sound knowledge of legal issues relating to counselling with children or young people, and of other issues relating to the safety, wellbeing and protection of the child or young person.
- 15.6 an ability to work effectively with others to formulate potential solutions
- 15.7 an ability to predict and manage consequences of applied solutions

## **16 Evaluation**

The trainee will be expected to be able to:

- 16.1 use critical reflection and undertake ongoing supervision with a suitable supervisor to assess and report on their own and others' work with the child or young person (section 10)
- 16.2 evaluate the chosen model of counselling, and compare it with alternative approaches, drawing on evaluative and evidence-based research and clinical experience
- 16.3 critically evaluate the implications of issues of culture, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation and disability in counselling.

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### ***COSCA Guideline on the Use of Technologies in: Counselling/Psychotherapy, Supervision and the Use of Counselling Skills***

This guideline provides guidance to those involved in the provision of counselling and psychotherapy, supervision and the use of counselling skills, using a range of different technologies. These include skype, instant messaging, texting, phone, email, chat rooms and fora, and other kinds of electronic means of communication.

COSCA recognises the importance of the use of technology for providing counselling and psychotherapy, supervision and in the use of counselling skills, and the significant benefits that the use of technologies can bring to clients, especially those who have difficulty in accessing face-to-face services or who have a preference for them.

As COSCA is firmly committed to public protection, this guideline may be used within COSCA's Complaints Procedure to consider issues arising from the practice of the use of technologies by COSCA members.

In the use of technologies, there is a different dynamic due to the counsellor, supervisor and the person using counselling skills not necessarily having direct control over the physical environment in which the use of technologies takes place. Counsellors and psychotherapists, supervisors and the users of counselling skills should nevertheless continue to ensure confidentiality of their own physical environment during the use of technologies.

In addition, counsellors and psychotherapists, supervisors and the users of counselling skills:

- have the responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure that their clients are in a safe physical environment, but they cannot be held responsible if their clients do not observe the terms of the contract. This contract should contain an informed consent procedure that informs the client about the safe use of technologies.
- should be adequately skilled to meet the ethical and legal standards and requirements of the use of technologies.
- should be acutely aware of the possibility of dual relationships and breaches of confidentiality being created with current and former clients through the personal use of public domain websites.
- should take account of international legislation regarding the delivery of the use of technologies in non UK countries

For more detailed knowledge of the ethical use and practice of technologies in counselling and psychotherapy, supervision and the use of counselling skills, please see links below:

- Online Therapy Institute's Ethical Framework for the Use of Technology in Mental Health - <http://www.onlinetherapyinstitute.com/ethical-training/>
- Risk Awareness and Management Programme (RAMP) Guidelines (2011) - "Delivering Mental Well-Being Services Online" - [RAMP Guidelines](#)

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## Outcome Measurement Tools for Children and Young People Counselling

The following is a list of outcome measurement tools for measuring the outcomes of counselling children and young people. It is not an exhaustive list but is offered to give an overview of some of the main tools used in Scotland to measure the benefits and impact on children and young people who have received counselling. Some of the tools are for researchers and others are for practitioners. The websites for further information on each tool are given below.

- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS).  
<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/>
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) – measures behaviour.  
<http://www.sdqinfo.com/>
- CORE Net (YP) (Young Persons) – measures feelings over the last week.  
[http://www.coreims.co.uk/Buy\\_Net\\_Software\\_YP.html](http://www.coreims.co.uk/Buy_Net_Software_YP.html)
- Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) – shows how parents grow.  
<http://www.comfortconsults.com/>
- Parent-Infant Relationship Global Assessment (PIR-GAS) – describes the strengths of the relationship and captures level of disorder  
<http://www.nctsnets.org/content/parent-infant-relationship-global-assessment>
- Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (ACEs)  
<http://www.acestudy.org/the-ace-score.html>
- ASI: Attachment Style Interview.  
<http://www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk/29/Attachment-Style-Interview-ASI>
- CORC's (Child Outcomes Research Consortium) Outcome Rating Scale (for adolescents and adults). (This is the rating scale used in the Professor Mick Cooper's English wide on-going study of counselling in schools.)  
<http://www.corc.uk.net/>

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