

ANALYSIS OF A COUNSELLING SESSION

This type of assessment requires you to analyse and evaluate the skills of a counsellor based on a video of their work. This assignment type often focuses on:

- the impact of the counselling skills on the client
- an evaluation of the counselling skills or approach used
- suggestions for changes or improvements if appropriate

Your assignment might ask you to analyse general counselling skills, or to focus on a specific approach, such as existential therapy or narrative therapy.

Content

The content of the analysis will be based on the specific guidelines or questions given with the assessment information. For example, you may be asked to identify and evaluate:

- The counsellor's communication skills, e.g. opening a session and building rapport
- The counsellor's adherence to professional requirements, e.g. explaining their position on confidentiality and record keeping to the client
- Their application of certain techniques, e.g. the use of counselling therapies discussed in the unit you are studying

You might also be asked to reflect on areas for improvement and future development. You might also need to transcribe parts of the dialogue to give as examples. This is called giving a verbatim example.



In all cases, you must use the theory from the unit you are studying as the basis of your discussion and analysis of the counsellor's skills.

Each assignment has unique requirements, so always check the assignment instructions and marking criteria.

Structure

An evaluation or analysis of a counselling session is a type of essay. Therefore, it should have:

- An introduction
- A series of body paragraphs
- A conclusion
- A reference list

Each body paragraph should explore one main idea and have a good balance of description, analysis and links to literature and theory.

More information about writing essays can be found on the Student Learning Support website.

Style

Try to avoid writing in an overly emotive or subjective way. Even though you are expressing your own analysis, you must convey this information in a professional style.

Here are some examples of sentences that have been rewritten more professionally.

- ✗ The client complained that her kids were really naughty.
- ✓ The client stated that her children were not well behaved.

- ✗ Even though the counsellor seemed unsure about digging deeper, I think her questioning was good.
- ✓ Even though the counsellor seemed apprehensive about probing, I think her questioning was appropriate.

Tips

- Don't write the assignment as a 'story' of the counselling session. Focus your assignment on the skills and approaches used in the session and use what happened in the session as examples to illustrate.
- Explain each skill/approach using references and back up your analysis and evaluation of each skill/approach with reference to theory also.
- Your analysis of the counselling session should lead to an overall conclusion about the effectiveness of the skills and approaches used. This conclusion could be very positive, very negative, or anywhere in between. Don't be shy about criticising the counsellor's use of skills if you think they made mistakes.
- Have references to support your praise or criticism of the counsellor's use of skills.
- If you think the counsellor could have done things differently, suggest what they should do.

Self-evaluation

Rate yourself on the following aspects of writing an evaluation or analysis of a counselling session.

- I know the theory of the unit that is relevant to the counselling session.
- I have watched the counselling session several times and made notes on the skills I will discuss in my assignment.
- I have analysed the counsellor's approach and skills and clearly stated how effectively the skills were used.
- I have supported my discussion of the skills and my analysis of the counsellor's use of the skills with theory and/or research.
- I have referenced all the theory and research I used in my assignment.
- My assignment leads to an overall conclusion based on the assignment question and instructions.

