



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

# **CHCFCS804B Provide counselling to children and young people**

**Release: 1**

## **CHCFCS804B Provide counselling to children and young people**

### **Modification History**

Not Applicable

### **Unit Descriptor**

#### **Unit Descriptor**

This unit of competency describes the skills and knowledge required to provide therapeutic interventions when working with young people and children

### **Application of the Unit**

#### **Application**

This unit of competency applies to family relationship counsellors providing counselling and other therapeutic interventions for children and young people within the family relationships work area and in accordance with the family law context and legislation

### **Licensing/Regulatory Information**

Not Applicable

### **Pre-Requisites**

Not Applicable

## Employability Skills Information

### Employability Skills

This unit contains Employability Skills

## Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements define the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.

The Performance Criteria specify the level of performance required to demonstrate achievement of the Element. Terms in italics are elaborated in the Range Statement.

## Elements and Performance Criteria

### ELEMENT

### PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

1. Engage child/young person in the counselling process

- 1.1 Set an *appropriate physical environment* to engage children and young people in counselling
- 1.2 Use *age appropriate engagement techniques* to gain child and/or young persons trust
- 1.3 Use communication strategies that are appropriate for the children/young people's developmental stage, culture and emotional needs
- 1.4 Maintain an *ethical relationship* with children/young people in accordance with practice standards and legislative requirements
- 1.5 Enable children to identify problem areas and effectively participate in the counselling process
- 1.6 Assess parental family/influences and engage with parents appropriately

<b>ELEMENT</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE CRITERIA</b>
2. Respond appropriately to allegations and disclosures of abuse	<p>2.1 Respond to disclosures and allegations in accordance with legislative requirements and organisation procedures</p> <p>2.2 Document factual information and observations as required by the organisation and any statutory child protection legislation</p> <p>2.3 Identify and <i>assess risk for clients</i> in relation to family domestic violence and other child protection concerns</p>
3. Formulate conceptualisation of the presenting problem	<p>3.1 Identify <i>factors relevant to the context of children /young persons in counselling</i></p> <p>3.2 Develop hypotheses to explain child/young person's presenting problems</p> <p>3.3 Monitor and review progress of sessions towards child/young persons goals</p>
4. Implement <i>case work processes</i> when counselling children and young people	<p>4.1 Develop a clear plan of how sessions will be conducted in collaboration with children and young people</p> <p>4.2 Develop measurable outcomes, treatment goals, treatment plans and after session plans with children and young people's input utilising <i>perspectives relevant to working with children and young people</i></p> <p>4.3 Work collaboratively with other stakeholders, including family members, other significant persons and professionals not present</p> <p>4.4 Record plans and complete other case documentation in accordance with practice setting policies, professional standards and legislative obligations</p> <p>4.5 Use a range of therapeutic interventions to engage and work with children and young people</p>

**ELEMENT****PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

5. *Terminate counselling sessions*
- 5.1 Recognise when the counselling is no longer serving the interests or needs of the client and family
- 5.2 Discuss with the client/s when counselling no longer appears to serve the client's interest or needs and either renegotiate the professional relationship or terminate the service
- 5.3 Engage client/s in determining any further external interventions as identified and arrange appropriate referrals
- 5.4 Discuss with the client any *interruptions to counselling*, planned or otherwise, and implement alternative interim counselling
6. Seek feedback from the client/s about the counselling service provided
- 6.1 Review counselling progress and provision regularly with the client in a developmentally appropriate way
- 6.2 Obtain feedback from the client at the conclusion of the counselling service
- 6.3 Use a range of developmentally appropriate feedback strategies to encourage client contribution to improved counselling practice
- 6.4 Review and reflect on client feedback and incorporate this information as part of supervision for the purpose of practice improvement

**Required Skills and Knowledge****REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

This describes the essential skills and knowledge and their level required for this unit.

*Essential knowledge:*

The candidate must be able to demonstrate essential knowledge required to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the identified work role

## REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

These include knowledge of:

- Stages of child development and relevance to work with vulnerable children
- Attachment and family systems theories and how these are applied to working with vulnerable and traumatised children
- Own prejudices and stereotyping attitudes and behaviour towards children and young people and the potential influence these may have on counselling practice.
- Limitations imposed on the counsellor client relationship as a result of professional and ethical responsibility in the context of an unequal balance of power in the counselling setting when working with children and young people.
- Limitations to the effectiveness or usefulness of counsellor in some circumstances and course of actions appropriate for client referral when necessary
- Contracting and reaching agreements with parents/ children and young people about the nature, process and expected timeframes and responsibilities for counsellor and client within the provisions of counselling.. Particular emphasis on client confidentiality and determination of who the client is in child counselling.
- Importance and opportunities for continuing professional development and maintaining a professional level of self awareness of current scientific and professional information and education in the area of counselling practices with children and young people.
- Indicators and dynamics of domestic and family violence and complexities of interpersonal interactions, e.g. power, abuse and conflict in family and sibling relationships
- Assessment skills, tools and instrument used to screen for abuse before, during and after child counselling and any additional safety planning requirements and procedures for clients and staff
- Referral options and pathways to support clients seeking interventions and supports beyond or in conjunctions with counselling
- Relevant state and federal legislation applicable to counselling practice
- Limitations of confidentiality that may arise in the counselling of children and young people setting
- Contemporary research and approaches to counselling in diverse cultural contexts
- Relevance of concepts of couple, family and child dynamics in normal and abnormal developmental forms
- Critical understanding and appreciation of the main approaches used in child and young person counselling

*continued ...*

*Essential knowledge (contd):*

- Stages of human development and how this knowledge applies to child and young person counselling practice
- Human diversity including culture, gender, age, ability, class, spirituality and ethnicity
- Range of impacts of separation and divorce on parents and children and other family

## REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

members

- Impact of conflict, particularly high level and/or ongoing conflict, on children, and the use of child focused approaches to intervene and minimise the impacts

### *Essential skills:*

It is critical that the candidate demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify and adhere to legislative requirements of counselling and working with children and young people in a broad range of contexts including Family Law and Child Protection
- Explain counselling goals and action plans and outline counselling process and agreements in terms that are understood by the child/young person
- Assess and screen for domestic and family violence and child abuse using a range of processes
- Monitor own competence through counselling supervision and be willing to consider the views expressed by clients and by counsellor colleagues
- Manage the counselling role within an ethical context with particular reference to the child focused practice where necessary.
- Recognise the strengths limitations and contraindications of specific therapeutic approaches, including risk of harm associated with approaches that incorporate assumptions of family dysfunction and application of adult techniques to children and young people
- Apply an appropriate counselling approach and identify specific interventions to ensure child and young person client needs are met.
- Compare and contrast child focused counselling theories and models
- Identify common concerns in the provision of child and young person counselling processes
- Work in a multidisciplinary environment where appropriate and respect the practice base of others.
- Manage confidentiality of information obtained from child and young person clients during the counselling process particularly with regard to limitations of confidentiality
- Maintain a solid theoretical base for effective and contemporary child and young person counselling practice
- Manage the dynamics of counselling children and young people experiencing high levels familial and parental conflict.
- Respect and promote client self determination and ability to make own decisions within the clients value, beliefs and child/young persons competency and context.
- Demonstrate sensitivity when counselling children and young people from diverse backgrounds
- Apply age appropriate communication and counselling strategies and models when working with children and young people e.g. use of play
- Complete case work and participate effectively in case management processes where

## REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

appropriate

- Produce case records, files and reports to a standard acceptable to industry standards

## Evidence Guide

### EVIDENCE GUIDE

The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the Performance Criteria, Required Skills and Knowledge, the Range Statement and the Assessment Guidelines for this Training Package.

*Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate this unit of competency:*

- The individual being assessed must provide evidence of *specified* essential knowledge as well as skills
- Observation of workplace performance is essential for assessment of this unit
- Consistency of performance should be demonstrated over the required range of client situations or scenarios relevant to the workplace including:
  - complex cases of child and/or young person counselling in situations of high level parental conflict

*Access and equity considerations:*

- All workers in community services should be aware of access, equity and human rights issues in relation to their own area of work
- All workers should develop their ability to work in a culturally diverse environment
- In recognition of particular issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, workers should be aware of cultural, historical and current issues impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Assessors and trainers must take into account relevant access and equity issues, in particular relating to factors impacting on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients and communities



## EVIDENCE GUIDE

### *Context of and specific resources for assessment:*

- In cases where the learner does not have the opportunity to cover all relevant aspects in the work environment, the remainder should be assessed through realistic simulations, projects, previous relevant experience or oral questioning on 'What if?' scenarios
- Assessment of this unit of competence will usually include observation of processes and procedures, oral and/or written questioning on essential knowledge and skills and consideration of required attitudes
- Where performance is not directly observed and/or is required to be demonstrated over a period of time and/or in a number of workplace settings, any evidence should be authenticated by colleagues, supervisors, clients or other appropriate persons

### *Method of assessment*

- Observation in the workplace is essential
- Written assignments/projects or questioning should be used to assess knowledge
- Case study and scenario as a basis for discussion of issues and strategies to contribute to best practice
- Counselling skills involving direct client contact are to be assessed *initially* on two occasions in a simulated counselling setting. If successful, further assessment is required during 10 hours actual counselling practice under direct supervision.
- The assessment environment should not disadvantage the candidate
- Assessment practices should take into account any relevant language or cultural issues related to Aboriginality, gender or language barriers other than English
- Where the candidate has a disability, reasonable adjustment may be applied during assessment
- Language and literacy demands of the assessment task should not be higher than those of the work role

## Range Statement

### RANGE STATEMENT

The Range Statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Add any essential operating conditions that may be present with training and assessment depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts.

*Appropriate physical environment may include:*

- Means by which an emotionally safe and empathic environment is created
- Appropriate space - child friendly
- Toys, puppets, experiential activities (crayons, textas, paints), sand tray and symbols e.g. dolls house, books and resources appropriate to various ages and which are culturally appropriate
- Resources for care-giver and other family members where relevant
- Where worker is able to 'control' the environment - a separate child specific and friendly space

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Age appropriate engagement techniques may include but are not limited to:*

- Age and developmentally appropriate communication techniques especially the use of play therapy
- Storytelling
- Methods of communicating with different age, religious, gender and sexual identity groups
- Non-judgemental communication techniques
- Using strategies that empower the client/young person
- Cultural, and sub-cultural awareness/sensitivity
- Demonstrating empathy
- Validating child or young persons emotions
- Using appropriate body language
- Asking open-ended questions
- Maintaining confidentiality
- The ability to ask direct questions about violence in a sensitive and appropriate way
- Active listening

*Ethical relationship must include:*

- Counselling practices that reflect the obligations of the practitioner under codes of ethics, and standards of professional membership and/or legislation, to ensure the safety and well being of the child and/or young person in the counselling relationship
- Counsellor knowledge and application of:
  - international conventions relating to the rights of children and young people
  - relevant international conventions on civil and human rights

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Respond to disclosures and allegations includes:*

Legislative and statutory requirements may include:

- Relevant state/territory/commonwealth legislation (e.g. domestic violence, guardianship, disability services, immigration, anti-discrimination, child protection, legal practice legislation, other legislation specific to children and young people)
- International conventions relating to the rights of children and young people
- Relevant international conventions on civil and human rights
- Freedom of Information legislation

*Assess risk for clients includes:*

- Self identification of risk, threat or attempts to self-harm
- Evidence of physical injuries
- Threat to safety
- Current or previous criminal charges for assault of client by partner/ex-partner, parents
- Current or previous police involvement
- Objective assessment of care-givers current ability to protect child/young person from further assault or harm
- Feelings of depression, anger, low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, emotional distress or sleep disturbances
- Medical problems such as overuse of tranquillisers, or alcohol, drug or substance abuse
- Intimidation and harassment
- Child/young person being denied access to required medications/ resources
- Existing or previous orders relating to domestic violence (e.g. apprehended violence order), or breach of orders
- Avoidance of discussion regarding possible abuse
- Implausible explanation for injuries
- Frequent hospital visits/admissions
- Current or previous parental separation
- Family court and/or relationship history
- Children who have been in care

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Factors relevant to the context of children/young persons in counselling may include:*

- Current or previous parental separation
- Family court and/or relationship history
- Children's behaviour and developmental level
- Other factors that may indicate a history of violence
- Feelings of depression, anger, low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, emotional distress or sleep disturbances
- Presenting issues including assessment with parents/care givers

*Case work processes may include:*

- Interviews with child/young person, their family, significant others and carers
- Completing applications and other forms such as questionnaires
- Case documentation - file notes, case plans
- Using specialist communicators, interpreters
- Classification tools
- Obtaining and processing information from professionals including medical reports and psychological and developmental assessment
- Obtaining ,processing and or providing information to/from service providers including child protection authorities
- Liaison with schools

*Terminate counselling sessions may include:*

- Planned termination of counselling
- Client or parents decision to terminate the sessions
- Counsellor assesses and identifies issues of concern in a client case which determine to continue counselling would be unethical and/or place the client and/or others at risk

## RANGE STATEMENT

*Interruptions to counselling may include:*

- Counsellor illness
- Counsellor planned leave
- Counsellor changes employment
- Interruptions due to organisation change
- Counsellor ceases practice
- Other external factors e.g. client illness, expert recommendations that counselling cease

*Client feedback strategies may include but are not limited to:*

- Interviews with colleagues
- Developmentally appropriate evaluation forms
- Complaints
- Recommendations
- Suggestions
- Focus group work
- Feedback on client from parent

*Perspectives relevant to working with children and young people may include but is not limited to:*

- Systemic
- Experiential
- Play therapy

## Unit Sector(s)

Not Applicable