COURSE OUTLINE

COU180 Therapeutic Communication Skills

School: School of Law and Society

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast UniSC Moreton Bay UniSC Caboolture UniSC Fraser Coast UniSC Gympie	BLENDED LEARNING	Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.
Online	ONLINE	You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to unisc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course introduces you to the skills and process of communication skills within a therapeutic setting. It concentrates on the theory and practice of developing a therapeutic relationship from a humanistic perspective using micro-skills. It considers issues impacting on engagement, such as diversity, and online delivery. Framed in counselling, the skills taught relate to relationship building and communication in many interpersonal contexts within a therapeutic setting, specifically aimed at health care workers.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Online learning activities embedded in the student learning management system.	1hr	Week 1	10 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – On campus, experiential tutorials aimed at practicing the knowledge and skills presented within the online learning materials.	2hrs	Week 1	10 times
Information session – Online Learning Activity, facilitated by each tutor for their own tutorial.	1hr	Refer to Format	3 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Online learning activities embedded in the student learning management system.	1hr	Week 1	10 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Online, interactive zoom tutorials aimed at practicing the knowledge and skills presented within the online learning materials.	2hrs	Week 1	10 times
Information session – Online Learning Activity, facilitated by each tutor for their own tutorial.	1hr	Refer to Format	3 times

1.3. Course Topics

All topics may contain mature content:

- The Therapeutic Relationship
- Joining & Listening
- Reflection of Content & Feeling
- Use of Questions
- Summarising and Ending
- Ethics and Diversity
- Professional Considerations (including Self Care, Online Therapeutic Communication Skills)

1.4. Mature Content

Adult themes

2. What level is this course?

100 Level (Introductory)

Engaging with discipline knowledge and skills at foundational level, broad application of knowledge and skills in familiar contexts and with support. Limited or no prerequisites. Normally, associated with the first full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		GRADUATE QUALITIES Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1	Demonstrate skill and growth in self-reflection and self-awareness.	Creative and critical thinker
2	Identify and critically analyse therapeutic communication skills and ethical practice within a counselling context for the promotion of health and wellbeing.	Knowledgeable Ethical
3	Demonstrate developing academic writing skills, including the application of APA7 conventions.	Knowledgeable
4	Identify ethical practices and standards within various therapeutic environments.	Knowledgeable Ethical
5	Comprehend and apply academic scholarship.	Knowledgeable

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the UniSC Glossary of terms for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

SCS180

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

5.5. Microcredential Information

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Formative (non-graded) online quiz on APA formatting and researching for academic writing will be made available to provide feedback on your understanding of these two important aspects of academic learning. Further resources and support will be accessible where desired/required.

Timely and detailed feedback is provided for each assessment. Feedback is provided both within text and general comments to build scholarly skills. Students are able to seek feedback through face-to-face discussion with the course coordinator. Tutorials will include extended discussion and review of the assessment task requirements and scope and 'drop-in' zoom information sessions will be made available closer to the assessment due dates.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Activity Participation	Individual	10%	Course duration	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	In Class
All	2a	Activity Participation	Individual	10%	120-180 seconds.	Week 5	Online Submission
All	2b	Portfolio	Individual	30%	120-180 seconds each	Week 9	Online Submission
All	3	Essay	Individual	30%	2000 words	Week 12	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	4	Quiz/zes	Individual	20%	60 questions	Exam Period	Online Test (Quiz)

All - Assessment Task 1: Participation

GOAL:	Student to demonstrate active participation and professionalism via tutorial participation in a minimum of 80% of tutorials.
PRODUCT:	Activity Participation
FORMAT:	Tutor to assess and record participation each week, in the LMS
CRITERIA:	**No.** — **Learning Outcome assessed** 1 Demonstrate counselling disposition via tutorial participation — 1
GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving

All - Assessment Task 2a: Single Skill Response Simulation

GOAL:	The goal of this assessment task is to demonstrate competency in informed consent skills.
PRODUCT:	Activity Participation
FORMAT:	Students will record a live response to a simulated client recording.
CRITERIA:	**No.** — **Learning Outcome assessed** 1 Demonstrate acceptable informed consent skills including privacy, confidentiality and mandatory reporting, whilst respecting client autonomy and whilst working toward establishing the therapeutic relationship. — 4 2 Demonstrate skill in visually and orally clear recording, within timeframe. — 5
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Organisation, Information literacy

All - Assessment Task 2b: 3 x Single Skill Response Simulation

GOAL:	The goal of this assessment task is to demonstrate competency in three further microskills (a: reflection of feeling and content, b: use of questions, and c: summarising).
PRODUCT:	Portfolio
FORMAT:	Students will record three further live response to the associated simulated client recordings.

CRITERIA:

No.		Learning Outcome assessed
1	Demonstrate reflection of feeling and content competency including use of active listening skills, paraphrasing, identification of affect and affect intensity whilst ensuring accuracy and demonstrating congruence and empathy.	4
2	Demonstrate approprate follow-up questions to support client elaboration	4
3	Demonstrate a comprehensive summary of client narrative including content and feeling, and use of a clarifying question.	4
4	Demonstrate above 3 x single skills in visually and orally clear recordings, each within their timeframe.	5

GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving

All - Assessment Task 3: Critical Analysis Essay

GOAL:	The purpose of this task is to analyse and critique a pre-recorded demonstration of micro-skills as shown within a therapeutic session. Ethical and diversity considerations also need to be examined, including evidence of reflection regarding the therapeutic relationship.
PRODUCT:	Essay
FORMAT:	2000 word written critique of the recorded micro-skills demonstration, linking observations of the skills, and their outcomes, to the principles of person centred counselling. Formal essay style required including a title page, introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion. Appropriate attribution to academic reference sources remains essential to avoid plagiarism. Accurate application of APA formatting to the submitted paper and the use of appropriate academic sources to support your arguments.

CRITERIA:

No.		Learning Outcome assessed
1	Demonstration of skills and growth in self-reflection and self-awareness.	1
2	Knowledge and awareness of ethical practices and diversity considerations within the therapeutic relationship.	2 4
3	Accuracy of grammar, punctuation, spelling, referencing and word limit. Accuracy of application of APA7 formatting and appropriate academic reference sources.	3 5

GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Organisation, Information literacy

All - Assessment Task 4: Online Test

GOAL:	You will demonstrate understanding of basic counselling theoretical frameworks and related skills, as presented during weeks 1 to 12
PRODUCT:	Quiz/zes
FORMAT:	Online test - 60 questions
CRITERIA:	**No.** / **Learning Outcome assessed** 1 Accuracy and correctness of responses — 2
GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Organisation

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

You need regular access to the resource(s) below. Many texts are available as ebooks through the Library at no additional cost.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Required	David Geldard, Kathryn Geldard, Rebecca Yin Foo	2021	Basic Personal Counselling	9th	Cengage Learning

8.2. Specific requirements

Nil

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the online induction training for students, and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:
(a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
(b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:
(a) One day: deduct 5%;
(b) Two days: deduct 10%;
(c) Three days: deduct 20%;
(d) Four days: deduct 40%;
(e) Five days: deduct 60%;
(f) Six days: deduct 80%;
(g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:
Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching

10.5. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The Student Charter sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.6. General Enquiries

For course-specific questions, contact your teaching staff or Course Coordinator.

For other enquiries or to access support, please contact Student Central:

- UniSC Student Central
- UniSC Adelaide Student Central