

# COU265 Strengths Based Counselling: Collaborative Approaches

**School:** School of Law and Society

2025 | Semester 2

UniSC Sunshine Coast  
UniSC Moreton Bay

**BLENDED  
LEARNING**

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

*Please go to [usc.edu.au](http://usc.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

Strengths based counselling sees people as having capabilities and resources within themselves and their social systems. It builds on client strengths to help them resolve concerns, heal and achieve desired changes. The course will be both knowledge-based and experiential, enabling you to promote change through respectful, educational, therapeutic and operational processes in addition to practices that encourage and empower others.

### 1.2. How will this course be delivered?

| ACTIVITY  | HOURS | BEGINNING WEEK  | FREQUENCY |
|---|-------|-----------------|-----------|
| <b>BLENDED LEARNING</b>   |       |                 |           |
| <b>Learning materials</b> – One hour-long engagement including formative quizzes, podcasts/webinars, screen casts, interviews, simulations, videos and recorded discussions   | 1hr   | Week 1          | 12 times  |
| <b>Tutorial/Workshop 1</b> – On campus tutorial- 2 hours to encourage the application of skills and knowledge introduced in the online learning materials for the week, via class activities (Week 11 tutorial via zoom to demonstrate telehealth principles) | 2hrs  | Week 1          | 10 times  |
| <b>Seminar</b> – Online learning activity facilitated by the tutor  | 1hr   | Refer to Format | Once Only |

### 1.3. Course Topics

- Strength based Counselling Introduction
- Solution Focused Counselling
- Narrative Therapy
- Applying strength based counselling to adult populations
- Applying strength based counselling to children and youth
- Skills Development

## 2. What level is this course?

200 Level (Developing)

Building on and expanding the scope of introductory knowledge and skills, developing breadth or depth and applying knowledge and skills in a new context. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally, undertaken in the second or third full-time year of an undergraduate programs.

## 3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

## 4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

| COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES  |  | GRADUATE QUALITIES   |
|---|--|--|
| On successful completion of this course, you should be able to... |  | Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming... |
| 1   | Analyse, apply and evaluate the use of a strength-based approach to counselling from a client and counsellor perspective.                                  | Knowledgeable<br>Empowered   |
| 2   | Identify and articulate the history and principles of strength-based collaborative counselling.  | Knowledgeable  |
| 3   | Critically reflect on your own values and beliefs in relation to the counselling process using a strengths-based approach.                                 | Empowered  |
| 4   | Demonstrate and apply your understanding of the ethical responsibilities and professional requirements underpinning the use of a strengths-based approach. | Ethical  |
| 5   | Demonstrate and utilise a solution-focused approach to build on progress, change, health and wellbeing for the clients that counsellors serve.             | Empowered  |
| 6   | Demonstrate effective communication through written reports and oral presentations, complying with accepted APA 7th ed. guidelines.                        | Knowledgeable<br>Creative and critical thinker                         |

## 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

COU180 or SCS180 or SCS280

### 5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

### 5.3. Anti-requisites

SCS265

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

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

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.

### 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           | 2        | Oral and Written Piece | Individual          | 25%         | 20 slides, each for 20 seconds | Week 4                                       | Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check |
| All           | 3        | Case Study             | Individual          | 30%         | 1500 words                     | Week 7                                       | Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check |
| All           | 4        | Essay                  | Individual          | 35%         | 2000 words                     | Week 13                                      | Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check |

#### All - Assessment Task 1: Participation

|                 |  |  |                           |
|-----------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| GOAL:           | Students will actively participate for a minimum of 80% of their on-campus tutorials. Failure to meet the minimum participation requirements will result in failure for this task. |  |                           |
| PRODUCT:        | Activity Participation   |  |                           |
| FORMAT:         | Tutor to record participation each week, via the LMS   |  |                           |
| CRITERIA:       | No.  |  | Learning Outcome assessed |
|                 | 1  | Demonstrate professional dispositions through tutorial participation | 4                         |
| GENERIC SKILLS: |  |  |                           |

#### All - Assessment Task 2: Pecha Kucha

|                 |  |  |                           |
|-----------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| GOAL:           | Demonstrate comprehension of the historical underpinnings of the strength based approaches, the ethical and professional requirements for effective delivery, and how their own beliefs and values influence their adoption of a chosen strength based approach. |  |                           |
| PRODUCT:        | Oral and Written Piece   |  |                           |
| FORMAT:         | Recorded and Narrated slide show.<br>Template of narration, image references, and source references.   |  |                           |
| CRITERIA:       | No.  |  | Learning Outcome assessed |
|                 | 1  | Demonstrate understanding of each strength based approach of counselling   | 1                         |
|                 | 2  | Demonstrate comprehension of the historical underpinnings of strength based counselling approaches.              | 2                         |
|                 | 3  | Demonstrate awareness of how own values and beliefs influence the adoption of a favoured strength based approach | 3                         |
|                 | 4  | Demonstrate knowledge in a Pecha Kucha format  | 6                         |
|                 |  |  |                           |
| GENERIC SKILLS: | Applying technologies, Information literacy  |  |                           |

### All - Assessment Task 3: Case Study

|                        |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| <b>GOAL:</b>           | Demonstrate awareness of essential competencies of a chosen strength based approach.<br>Critically reflect of own essential counselling competencies, and best practice techniques to develop competencies to minimum expected standards. |   |
| <b>PRODUCT:</b>        | Case Study  |   |
| <b>FORMAT:</b>         | Written assignment, to APA 7th ed. standards.   |   |
| <b>CRITERIA:</b>       | <b>No.</b>  | <b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>  |
|                        | 1   | Demonstrate awareness of essential counselling competencies (as introduced in COU180) 1   |
|                        | 2   | Demonstrate self-awareness of own competency strength and weaknesses, including best practice techniques to develop those competencies identified as needing further development. 1 |
|                        | 3   | Written communication skills, including APA 7th ed. conventions 6   |
| <b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b> | Communication, Information literacy   |   |

### All - Assessment Task 4: Critical Reflective Essay

|                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| <b>GOAL:</b>           | To critically reflect on own skills practice during tutorials using an accepted experiential learning model (e.g., Kolb) from the perspective of counsellor as well as client.  |  |
| <b>PRODUCT:</b>        | Essay   |  |
| <b>FORMAT:</b>         | This is a Critical Reflective Essay, written to accepted essay structure (introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion, references), and APA 7th ed. formatting and referencing conventions. Students are to critically reflect on the experience of strength based practice as a client, as well as two (2) strengths and two (2) areas needing further development as counsellor. Plans for improvement need to be informed from the literature. |  |
| <b>CRITERIA:</b>       | <b>No.</b>  | <b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>   |
|                        | 1   | Demonstrate awareness of developing competencies related to basic counselling micro-skills (person-centred counselling skills) 1 5 |
|                        | 2   | Demonstrate written academic essay writing skills, including APA 7th ed. formatting and referencing conventions 6                  |
|                        | 3   | Discuss accepted adjustments to strength based approaches when working with diverse populations, as informed from the literature 4 |
| <b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b> | Communication, Problem solving  |  |

## 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

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

| REQUIRED? | AUTHOR                               | YEAR | TITLE                      | EDITION | PUBLISHER                    |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|------|----------------------------|---------|------------------------------|
| Required  | Peter De Jong, Insoo Kim Berg        | 2013 | Interviewing for Solutions | 4th     | Wadsworth Publishing Company |
| Required  | John J. Murphy, Jacqueline A. Sparks | 2018 | Strengths-Based Therapy    | n/a     | Routledge                    |

### 8.2. Specific requirements

Not applicable

## 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. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email [safe@usc.edu.au](mailto:safe@usc.edu.au).

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email [studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au).

### 10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or [studentcentral@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentcentral@usc.edu.au).

### 10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email [studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au) or call 07 5430 1226.

### 10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email [AccessAbility@usc.edu.au](mailto:AccessAbility@usc.edu.au) or call 07 5430 2890.

### 10.8. 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>

### 10.9. 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.

### 10.10. General Enquiries

#### In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

**Tel:** +61 7 5430 2890

**Email:** [studentcentral@usc.edu.au](mailto:studentcentral@usc.edu.au)