



COURSE OUTLINE

cou707 Counselling and Mental Health

School: School of Law and Society

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast

BLENDED
LEARNING

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Please go to 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

This course will introduce you to the field of mental health, and provide a basis for the acquisition of foundational knowledge for the practice of mental health counselling. You will learn about contemporary mental health assessment, explore dominant psychotherapeutic approaches, examine ethical counselling practise, and utilise experiential approaches to develop capacity in mental health therapeutic interviewing. Holistic case management and the recovery model are also explored.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – On campus workshop - 3 hours	3hrs	Week 1	11 times

1.3. Course Topics

Mental Health, Illness and Treatment in Australia;
Counsellor Scope of Practice;
Stigma in Mental Health; Learning from Lived Experience;
Pharmacology for Counsellors;
Protective and Vulnerability Factors in Mental Health;
Trauma-informed understanding in Mental Health;
Assessment in Mental Health
Introduction to Psychiatric Classification: The DSM V
Therapeutic orientations in Mental Health Counselling;
Case Formulation and Therapeutic Planning;
Attachment and Mental Health
Mentalisation Approaches in Mental Health 1 and 2
Introduction to Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
Group Psychotherapy; Planning a group-based program
Suicidality in Mental Health Counselling
Art-based approaches in Mental Health Counselling
Transpersonal Perspectives in Mental Health
[Adult themes across all topics]

1.4. Mature Content

Adult themes

2. What level is this course?

700 Level (Specialised)

Demonstrating a specialised body of knowledge and set of skills for professional practice or further learning. Advanced application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.

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...
<p>① Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the mental health field by critically examining understanding of what constitutes mental illness, health and recovery including evidence-based diagnosis and treatment paradigms.</p>	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Empowered
<p>② Analyse and evaluate the role of counselling, pharmacotherapy and other treatment supports used with individuals impacted by mental health issues.</p>	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker
<p>③ Critically analyse and synthesise the complex knowledge required to enable tailoring and facilitation of individualised mental health counselling interventions.</p>	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Empowered Ethical
<p>④ Apply a client-directed and outcome informed approach in developing a comprehensive treatment plan for a client presenting with mental health issues in an ethical and responsible manner.</p>	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Ethical
<p>⑤ Apply specialist mental health counselling knowledge in the development of a tailored group counselling intervention. Evidence of ethical consideration in the intervention design.</p>	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Empowered Ethical
<p>⑥ Demonstrate a developing scholarly capacity in written submissions, incorporating clarity of written expression, integration of academic literature, and adherence to APA style.</p>	Knowledgeable Engaged

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

Enrolled in Program AR708

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

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

A Week 4 quiz will provide feedback in relation to acquired theoretical knowledge. An in-class presentation task presents opportunities for formative feedback in the early and mid weeks of the trimester. Timely and detailed feedback is provided for each of the later summative assessments. Informal feedback is provided within-class in response to individual and class activities. Students are invited to seek feedback through face-to-face discussion with the course coordinator.

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	Quiz/zes	Individual	20%	1 Hour	Week 4	Online Test (Quiz)
All	2	Oral	Individual	0%	15 minutes	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	In Class
All	3	Plan	Individual	40%	2000 Words	Week 10	Online Submission
All	4	Plan	Group	40%	2500 words	Exam Period	Online Submission

All - Assessment Task 1: Progress assessment of knowledge related to Counselling in Mental Health

GOAL:	To demonstrate acquisition of foundational knowledge in Counselling and Mental Health (Weeks 1-4 of the course).	
PRODUCT:	Quiz/zes	
FORMAT:	An online multiple-choice test.	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1 Accuracy in understanding key concepts relating to material covered in the first 4 weeks of the course	1 2
GENERIC SKILLS:	Information literacy	

All - Assessment Task 2: MH Presentation

GOAL:	Work in arrangements of three students, to jointly develop an oral/visual presentation focused on a selected Mental Health condition.	
PRODUCT:	Oral	
FORMAT:	<p>The presentation will incorporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) a description of the presenting condition; ii) information about the course and progress of the condition; iii) presenting therapeutic needs/goals associated with the condition; iv) evidence-based (psychotherapeutic) treatment approaches; v) a brief lived experience representation of the MH condition - a resourced video/podcast/art-making/narrated poetry(as examples). <p>Presentations will be timetabled as part of class time across weeks 5-10 of the trimester.</p>	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1 Demonstrate developing knowledge of a mental health condition, incorporating presentation, developmental factors, treatment approaches, recovery and an appreciation of lived experience.	1
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Organisation, Information literacy	

All - Assessment Task 3: Mental Health Treatment Plan

GOAL:	You will create a mental health treatment plan based on a provided case study	
PRODUCT:	Plan	
FORMAT:	<p>A 2000 word written report outlining a treatment plan for an identified case study.</p> <p>Your plan will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) assessment approaches and items; ii) presentation of a possible diagnosis, iii) conceptualisation of the client's presenting issues, iv) identification of influencing factors, v) development of client/counsellor treatment goals; vi) description and scholarly rationale for a selected counselling approach(es); and vii) an outline of projected themes/ aims/goals/focus/activities across sessions 1-3 (early); 4-7 (mid); 8-10 (trajectory). 	
CRITERIA:	<p>No.</p> <p>1 Evidenced understanding of the biopsychosocial frameworks for viewing mental ill-health.</p> <p>2 Demonstrated capacity in relation to assessment and case formulation;</p> <p>3 Demonstrated capacity to identify an appropriate, evidence-based counselling treatment approach;</p> <p>4 Logical alignment of presented content, use of appropriate literature and research to support the argument. Consistent application of APA7 referencing and formatting style.</p>	<p>Learning Outcome assessed</p> <p>1 2</p> <p>1 2 3</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>6</p>
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy	

All - Assessment Task 4: Group Therapeutic Plan

GOAL:	To create a six-session group therapy plan for a specific client population group.	
PRODUCT:	Plan	
FORMAT:	<p>A 2500 (approx.) word written report. The report will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a rationale for a group therapy approach with an identified client group – e.g. Individuals experiencing depression or anxiety or an eating disorder; Detail a six-session group therapy plan developed to meet the therapeutic needs of the identified group' Include a description of the identified client population; Define particular therapeutic needs of this group; Identify and describe the psychotherapeutic framework that is to inform program implementation; Summarise the main aims and intended outcomes of the program; Define the duration and structure of each session; Present a weekly plan for each session, including activities, Identify benefits associated with group participation (evidenced-based); Reflect on dealing with any possible challenges in the presented program; Reference appropriately. 	
CRITERIA:	<p>No.</p> <p>1 Comprehensive, professional and therapeutically informed description of the client group; potential therapeutic needs of the group are identified;</p> <p>2 Demonstrated understanding of i) the nature and utility of group therapy in mental health counselling; ii) the specific fit of group therapy approaches for the identified client group;</p> <p>3 Capacity to identify an appropriate psychotherapeutic framework, and to provide an effective scholarly rationale for this framework for the selected mental health presentation and population.</p> <p>4 Demonstrated capacity to design an appropriate, evidence-based 6-week group therapy program, that reflects congruence between activities and aims/goals; reflects expected structures/ processes of group therapy; and responds to potential challenges;</p> <p>5 Detail a weekly plan for each session, including setting, themes, aims, activities, content overview and handouts (where used); provide an overall resources list with budget;</p> <p>6 Use of appropriate support literature, Logical alignment of presented content, clarity of expression; Effective application of APA7 referencing and formatting style.</p>	Learning Outcome assessed
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy	

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

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

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. 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](#) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](#) or email 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](#) or email 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.

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 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 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