



5 STEP PLAN

to success as an
online
counselling
student

Workbook

Unlock your potential as an online
counselling student and reach your goal!



This workbook belongs to

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Welcome!



Embarking on any journey to change something in your life, learn something new or achieve a long held ambition can seem enormous...

But big journeys begin with small steps...or they don't begin at all! That's what our 5 Step Plan is for. We're here to give you the tools that you need to achieve your goal as an online counselling student.

Ask yourself, if I start today where will I be in 3 weeks, 3 months or 3 years time?





5 STEP PLAN

TO SUCCESS AS AN ONLINE COUNSELLING STUDENT

Welcome to the journey of becoming a successful online counselling student.

This workbook is designed to complement our comprehensive online workshop, guiding you through our structured 5-step plan.

1. Mindset
2. Focus
3. Feedback
4. Demonstrate
5. Reflect

Each play a crucial role in your development as a skilled listener or counsellor.

By following these steps, you will cultivate the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to excel in your counselling career.

You'll find handy checklists, goal setting templates and a journalling guide to help you progress along your journey as a counselling student and to reach your potential!



ABOUT US

Established in 1970, Life is a UK charity for women and families facing unexpected pregnancy or pregnancy loss, including abortion loss. Life helps tens of thousands of people experiencing crisis pregnancies or loss each year.

We provide services including free pregnancy tests, counselling and skilled listening via phone, text, email, or in person. We also provide practical help as well as housing for women facing homelessness when pregnant.

Our national helpline has a highly trained team of skilled listeners and experienced, registered counsellors supporting those in need.

At Life, we have been delivering counselling skills NCFE CACHE qualifications to our own volunteers for over 25 years. Our learners benefit from a team of incredibly experienced counsellors and educators in this area.

In 2019 we launched our Online Learning Centre to make counselling skills and accredited qualifications accessible to all.

We have a wealth of experience not only in counselling but delivering counselling skills training online. Our learners benefit from high quality course content and personalised support from our tutors who are experienced and practicing counsellors.

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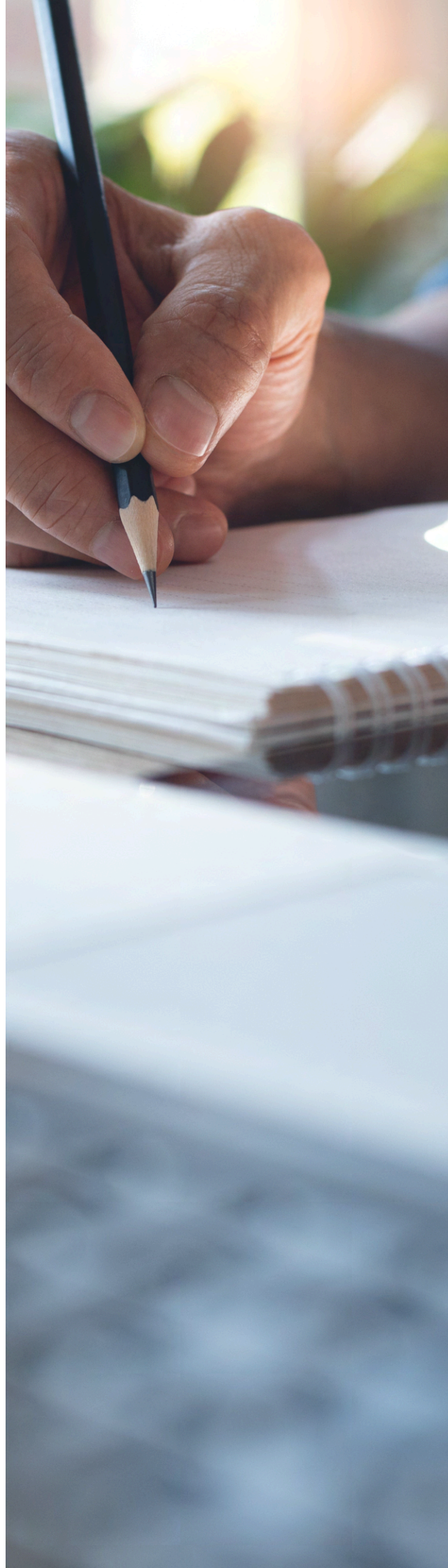
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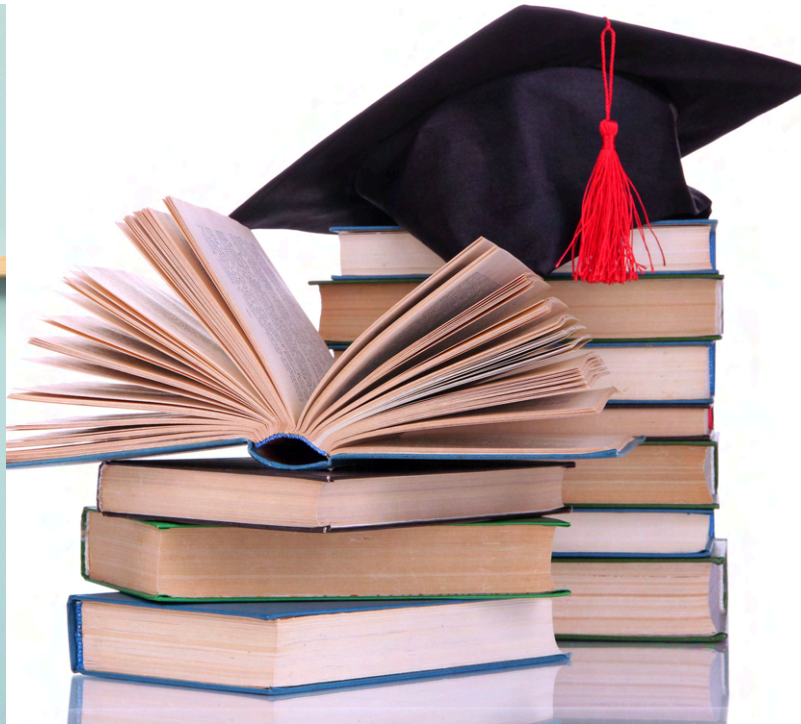
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00 Introduction

Perhaps you have wanted to be a counsellor for a long time but life has gotten in the way and you haven't been able to start until now,

Maybe you want to change something in your life to make it better, more balanced, more fulfilling,

Perhaps you want to start learning a new skill to be able to volunteer or help you in your current role.

Like many aspiring counsellors you may just want to make a difference and help others.

Whatever your reason for wanting to develop counselling skills, we are here to get you started in the best way possible.

Everything covered in the online workshop has been captured here in this comprehensive workbook.

It will take you through the 5 steps of our simple plan that will give you all the tools you need to be successful online counselling student.

Complete the exercises to find your why, identify your goals and plan a study schedule that fits your needs.

Included are handy templates and activities to help you find your way to achieving your goal and to give you clarity on what each qualification is for and where it can take you.

Thank you for attending our workshop and we wish you all the best with your studies!

01

Mindset



Get in the right frame of mind...

First and foremost, having the right mindset is essential for your success.

Your attitude and mental state can significantly impact your ability to learn, absorb new information, and apply it effectively in real-life situations.

A positive, committed mindset will enable you to overcome challenges and stay motivated throughout your studies.



- Commit - make the commitment to spend time on your studies and to achieve your goal - make the pledge!
- Invest - invest in the right course but also invest your time, energy and focus in moving forward!
- Prioritise - Is it 'I don't have time for this' or 'I am not making this my priority?' - set your goals and make the sacrifices necessary for success!
- Plan - Failing to plan is planning to fail! Never a truer word said! Create the schedule that works for you!
- Growth Mindset - believe that your abilities can be developed through hard work and dedication



MINDSET Checklist

COMMITMENT

- I commit myself to the successful completion of my counselling skills course.
- I will dedicate ____ study hours per week.
- I will embrace a growth mindset and utilise challenges as opportunities to learn and grow. i will view feedback as constructive advice to help me set next steps and progress

INVEST

- I will make the financial investment necessary to enrol on the best course for me.
- I am prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to ensure I have the time to focus on my studies.
- I will engage fully with my course material and seek further reading and resources to enhance my understanding

PRIORITISE

- I have identified my 'why'
- I have set my end goal.
- I have set some initial short term targets or SMART targets

PLAN

- I have created my first study schedule.
- I have outlined deadlines for my first tasks and assignments.
- I have planned how I will complete the skills practice element of my course

CHALLENGES

Outline any challenges you see

SOLUTIONS

Consider possible solutions

STUDY Planner

Set a realistic study schedule. Remember it can change but try and keep to your weekly study hours as set out in your Mindset Checklist.

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

Saturday/Sunday:

Deadlines *Outline when you would like to have assignments, skills practice sessions, and/or units completed by.*

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-

Reading List: *Keep a list of further reading materials you have either read or want to read.*

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-

Focus



Before you identify your end goal, it's crucial to understand your **why**. Your why is the driving force behind your decision to pursue this qualification. Reflect on what motivates you.

Perhaps you have a **passion for helping others**, and your goal is to **make a difference** and contribute positively to your community or society, this sense of purpose can help you maintain your focus.

You may be looking to **add to your skill set** to support you in your current role or to help you **progress in your career**. Knowing that your studying will give you a valuable qualification can be a strong incentive to stay dedicated.

Or, are you finally making the steps to fulfil a long held ambition to **become a fully qualified counsellor**. Finally being able to embark on this journey can be exciting and can fuel your commitment to your studies.

Complete the What is Your Why? activity on the following page to find out what is pushing you to develop counselling skills.



WHAT IS YOUR WHY?

Reflection Prompts to Find Your WHY

Find a quiet space where you can reflect without interruptions. Have a notebook, journal or some way of recording your responses.

1

Reflect on a moment in your life when you felt the need to support or help someone. Describe the situation, your feelings, and the outcome.

2

Consider any personal experiences that may have influenced your decision to pursue counseling. What impact did these experiences have on you?

3

Think about the qualities you admire in effective counsellors or skilled listeners. Do you see these qualities in yourself? How do you hope to develop them through this course?

4

Imagine your future as a counsellor or skilled listener. What kind of impact do you hope to make on your clients and community? Why is this important to you?

5

What are your main motivations for undertaking training in counselling skills? What do you hope to gain?

6

Write a summary of your reflections, focusing on the key reasons driving your ambition to become a counsellor or skilled listener.





GOAL SETTING *Planner*

	Date:
--	-------

My goal for this year

Why I want to achieve this

Problems that may appear	Possible solutions
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What will I do to achieve my goals?	How will I monitor my process?
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Tasks that will lead to my goal

Date	Tasks	✓
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>

SMART TARGET *Planner*

USE THIS TEMPLATE TO BREAKDOWN
YOUR OVERALL GOALS INTO MANAGEABLE
SMART TARGETS

S	<p><u>SPECIFIC</u></p> <p>WHAT DO I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?</p>	
M	<p><u>MEASURABLE</u></p> <p>HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN IT IS ACCOMPLISHED?</p>	
A	<p><u>ACHIEVABLE</u></p> <p>HOW CAN THE GOAL BE ACCOMPLISHED?</p>	
R	<p><u>RELEVANT</u></p> <p>DOES THIS SEEM WORTHWHILE?</p>	
T	<p><u>TIME BOUND</u></p> <p>WHEN CAN I ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL?</p>	

03

Feedback



Constructive feedback is a cornerstone of your development as a counselling student. It helps you progress, identify areas for improvement, and refine your skills.

By embracing feedback, adopting a growth mindset, and learning from experts, you set yourself on a path of continuous improvement and professional growth.

Undertaking any training in counselling skills can be emotionally taxing. It is crucial you have a supportive tutor to walk through difficult moments with. Seeking advice and support is a sign of strength not weakness, always reach out when you start to feel the weight of what is going on.

Remember, the journey of developing your counselling skills is ongoing, and with each step, you are becoming a more effective and empathetic counsellor or skilled listener.

Overleaf there is a handy feedback and next steps activity to complete when you have had any feedback from your tutor. Laying out the key points from your feedback and any next steps that have been suggested will help you focus on the next stage of your training with clarity.

FEEDBACK & NEXT STEPS

Summary of Feedback

Strengths

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-
-
-
-
-

Areas for development

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-
-

Next Steps

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04

Demonstrate



Theoretical knowledge forms the foundation of your counselling education, but it's the practical application of these concepts that transforms you into a skilled listener or counsellor.

Understanding the theory and science behind counselling is important, but without the ability to implement these skills effectively, that knowledge has limited value.

The true essence of counselling lies in the ability to connect, empathise, and communicate with clients, and this requires practice.



Regularly putting your core counselling skills into action is essential. This practice helps you internalise the techniques and approaches you've learned, making them second nature.

By consistently applying these skills, you become more confident and competent as a skilled listener and counsellor. This process requires a time commitment and numerous opportunities to practice, but the benefits are invaluable.

Demonstrating your skills through practice and reflection pulls all your learning together. It bridges the gap between theory and practice, creating a comprehensive learning experience.

By actively engaging in practical exercises, receiving expert feedback, and maintaining a reflective journal, you develop a more nuanced understanding of counselling.

Skills Practice *Reflection*

Date : S M T W T F S

Brief outline of conversation

Reflection

Focus Core Skill/s:

Next Steps:

Thinking about what went well and what was tricky or down right difficult, what steps you could take to improve your practice?

Reflect



Self reflection is a vital component of your journey to becoming a successful counselling student. It enhances your understanding of your personal and professional development, helps you identify strengths and areas for improvement, and fosters self-awareness of your capabilities and limitations.

Sharing your reflections with your tutor provides valuable feedback and guidance, while adopting a reflective habit ensures ongoing growth and competence. Remember, the path to becoming an effective counsellor is one of continuous reflection, learning, and self-improvement.

By embracing this step, you are well on your way to becoming a confident, skilled, and empathetic counsellor.

Top Tips for Self Reflection

- Regular Journaling

Dedicate a specific time each week for reflective journaling. Use the prompts on the following page to consider your interactions from the week. Include any experiences, thoughts and feelings related to your counselling studies

- Seek and Reflect on Feedback

Actively seek feedback from your tutor or the speakers from your skills practice sessions, and take time to reflect on it. Remember to look at constructive feedback as a way to improve your practice. Look at the question prompts to help you dig a bit deeper into your feedback.

- Be Honest!

It is essential that you are honest with yourself when reflecting on your practice and progress. This ensures you're making realistic assessments and taking meaningful steps toward improvement. The honesty checklist will help you take a square look at yourself!



Reflection *Prompts*

Reflect on a Recent Learning Experience

- What is one key concept or skill you have learned recently?
- How do you plan to apply this in your practice?
- Describe a situation where this new knowledge was or could be beneficial.

Reflect on Feedback

- What can I learn from this feedback?
- How has it made me feel? Why is this?
- How can I apply it to improve my skills?
- What changes can I make to my approach?
- What am I doing well?
- Can I use my strengths to help me improve areas that I need to develop?

Reflect on Skills Practice

- Consider the core skill(s) you are focusing on, how are you incorporating them into your skills practice sessions?
- Have any interactions gone particularly well? Why is this?
- Think about a challenging interaction, what made it difficult? What can you take forward from that experience?
- Have you felt out of your comfort zone at all? Why is this? How can you address this?

Reflection *Prompts*

Honesty Checklist

- Have I acknowledged any difficulties I am currently encountering?
- Have I recognised what is going well?
- Am I being open to feedback and embracing a growth mindset?
- Am I maintaining my focus and keeping up with my study schedule? Do I need any support in this area?
- Am I setting realistic goals and am I consistently meeting them?
- Have I been honest about any emotional impact I am experiencing?
- Have I considered how am I managing stress and my well-being while studying?
- Do I need to ask for support in any area?



THANK YOU!

Thank you for attending our 5 Step Plan workshop!

We hope you find this workbook helpful as you embark on your journey as an online counselling student! Stay committed, remain open to learning, and always, always, always reflect on your progress and practice! Your dedication and hard work will pave the way for a rewarding and impactful destination as a skilled listener or fully qualified counsellor!



A gentle reminder...

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NEED MORE INSIGHT?

BOOK A CALL

*with a member
of the team*



Would like to know more about the courses and volunteer opportunities with Life? Book a call with a member of the team and we will be happy to talk through the best starting point for you, and answer any burning questions you may have.

Alternatively, email us at ncfe@lifecharity.org.uk.

Click the link below and select a time convenient for you!

We look forward to talking with you!

[Book a call with an advisor](#)

A good counsellor is..

empathetic

open

a skilled
listener

self aware

non -
judgemental

trustworthy

life

