

TC-L4 Learning Review - Guidance for Candidates

This is a regular exploration of your learning – *your reflections on the input, discussions, experiences and readings for the course, and may refer to client work too* – which is started right from the beginning of the course. If you are in personal counselling you can include insights gained from these sessions. Ideally this review should be written as soon as possible after each lesson (or counselling) session. Focus on your own thoughts, feelings and responses rather than referring to handouts or repeating what your tutor said.

How to write a learning review for TC-L4

A learning review should demonstrate a real understanding and application of what you are learning and how you are affected by it. You will need to be able to evaluate your self-awareness and skills and bring in other aspects of your learning such as books you have read, discussion sessions in class etc. Your tutors may ask you to link your review to literature you have studied and illustrate your learning with academic references when appropriate.

You will also need to write about your growing self-development, which could include what you learn about yourself during personal therapy sessions and in the process group. You should include your relationships in and out of the group. You could link in Unit 5 assessment criteria when providing evidence of self-understanding and development.

Notes

Read any notes you made during the session and re-read the handouts; look for what you have learned, understood and assimilated.

- At this level you will probably be writing several pages each week. It is important to keep the focus on your learning and keep your personal comments to those that are relevant to the course and your self-awareness/development.
- Candidate learning record; see where you're learning addresses a criterion and add the criterion numbers (including the unit number) in the margin opposite the paragraph or sentence where you have addressed it.
- Writing the journal is part of developing the skills of a reflective practitioner, which is an essential element in developing as a counsellor.
- Meeting criteria: over a two-year course, you may not write sufficiently on a topic to put an entry in the candidate learning record during the first year. Learning takes time and it is quite possible you will not understand or work with a criterion sufficiently to enter it until the end of the first year or even into the second.

Assessment

Your tutor will probably ask to see your learning review on a regular basis, which may be weekly.

- As well as offering support and encouragement, your tutor will check your criterion referencing. The tutor will probably ask you to submit a CAS sheet with every submission of your work; you will indicate which criterion you believe you have met. The tutor will give you feedback, with either YES (this is sufficient) or NO and a request for additional work.
- Many tutors will write comments on your text. Most students find this helpful as you will know exactly where you have done well and what further work might be needed.

- If you are required to write additional evidence, do not delete anything from your portfolio; just write another paragraph or sheet as requested. Your original work must remain to be seen by the CPCAB external verifier who checks the tutor's assessment and moderation. In addition, this tracks your growing self-development and understanding.

Other ways of using the learning review

Some tutors may ask you to use the learning review in a different way.

- Most of the criteria will be evidenced through assignments, so your tutors may ask you to use the learning review just for criteria not met through the other assignments. You may be asked to write a summary of the learning review or invited to address specific criteria. In this case you would probably hand in your review less frequently than described earlier. The choice is up to the tutors.

EXAMPLE OF A TC-L4 LEARNING REVIEW

Year 2 Week 15

This week we have focused in theory on integrating the two models we have learned. I feel this is where we will develop joined up writing bringing together the various aspects of theory into one cohesive whole. I can't see it myself at present, but hopefully with two terms to bring it all together it will make sense eventually.

Our tutor gave us a definition of an integrative course which comes from an article in the BACP Counselling Journal (1998) by Sue Wheeler. She says "An integrative course shows how the integrated approaches have been considered in relation to an understanding of

- human growth/development
- development of psychological problems
- the nature of the relationship
- skills and techniques and assessment of client difficulty".

Our tutors started today with human growth and development. We had been set a chapter from both the TA and Gestalt course books. We read them over the week and came back today for a seminar on how the two models look at growth and development.

I found the TA book very clear. The injunctions and counter injunctions which help form the script we live to clearly show how we develop from our childhood into the person we are today. I like the idea that we are free to change these early decisions, though recognise how hard this is for us. I know that my mother being stiff and unapproachable (because of her upbringing) has made it hard for me to relate easily with people. I nearly lost touch with my husband when we were going out together, because I would never contact him. I could not put my hand out, metaphorically, and say I need you or want you. He has told me he almost lost heart, but fortunately he loved me enough to keep trying to reach me. I have made some changes - I have given myself permission to ask for help and say how much I love him and want him near me. But it was a tough change.

We have this amazing handout written by Elaine Childs Gowell and Sharon Glantz where the various abuses and neglects that can happen to children and babies are written showing, how they affect the adult depending on the age of the child who was abused. It is amazing. Neglect suffered

as a baby can lead to eating problems, wanting bland food like custard or porridge. Makes sense to me; whenever I am feeling down I just want custard, hot or cold it does not matter. I like to wrap myself up in my duvet and watch something silly on TV. Thinking about it now, I can see I regress into a small child wanting to be cosseted but knowing I would have to do it for myself.

Initially I could not see the same clarity about Gestalt, but then we talked about unfinished business, and it all became clear. Yes of course we work in the here and now, but clients often talk about the past and how they were treated and what they feel about times from their childhood, but our training tells us to ask them to describe it as though it is happening now. So, we keep them in the present even though we are dealing with the past. That way we only deal with what is still causing them difficulty; what is unfinished.

I am starting to see how these two models can work together. We discussed inviting clients to talk about their injunctions in the present tense, so we are using a Gestalt technique with a TA concept. We practiced it in skills after the theory session and it was really exciting. It worked brilliantly.

As a client I talked about having to take care of myself when small; that my mother never noticed if I was unwell or unhappy. Being asked to talk about it as though it's happening now moved me directly into my adult need for custard and the duvet. I asked me to say what I really wanted when I felt like that, and I could see how I expected my husband to ignore me and not nurture me. More importantly, how I never asked him to do so.

I am so excited - I want to go home and talk with my husband. I want to try asking him for a cuddle or to be cared for; I know he would be happy to do it.