

Diploma in Counselling and Communication Skills

Module Descriptors

Academic Literacy (NQF 5, 12 credits)

This module develops information literacy competency and assists the student in attaining skills to comply with the required academic standard at the South African College of Applied Psychology. This module introduces the student to the skills of recognising information need, as well as how to access relevant information, identify quality information, evaluate and synthesise information. This module teaches the student how to practically apply APA referencing style, inspiring confidence in research, writing and submitting academic assignments.

Introduction to Psychology A (NQF 5, 12 credits)

This module introduces the student to the diverse field of Psychology and provides an overview of some of the various perspectives that have emerged in Psychology over the years. The student will be introduced to central theories from the numerous sub-fields in the discipline of Psychology, such as Research Psychology, Biological and Neuropsychology, Developmental Psychology, and Cognitive Psychology. Throughout the module, the student will be exposed to South African case studies on various topics.

Introduction to Psychology B (NQF 5, 12 credits)

This module follows from the Introduction to Psychology A module and continues to provide the student with a broad understanding of the field of Psychology. The module introduces the student to the terminology, theories and principles related to Personality, Social Psychology, Psychology and Health, and Mental Health Issues in the in South African context. Various Psychotherapeutic modalities will be introduced and a broad overview of the field of Organisational Psychology will be explored. Throughout the module, the student will engage with African theories and perspectives in these sub-fields of Psychology as well as South African case studies on the various topics.

Counselling Modalities 1 (NQF 5, 14 credits)

This module introduces the student to the theoretical foundations of counselling and psychotherapy. Throughout the study of this module, the student will explore various theoretical approaches to counselling and psychotherapy, including the history and development of each theory, key theorists, and the theory's perspective on personality development. In addition, the student will engage with the implications of these on personality theory and counselling modalities. While this module is primarily interested in the theoretical foundations of the different counselling modalities, rather than the application thereof, basic techniques, therapeutic goals, and processes will be explored. This module focuses on the contextual issues facing counselling and psychotherapy in South Africa, the basic ethical

principles requiring consideration in counselling, as well as the following approaches to counselling and psychotherapy: Jungian Analysis and Therapy; Adlerian Therapy; Existential Therapy; Person-Centred Therapy; and Gestalt Therapy.

Counselling Modalities 2 (NQF 5, 14 credits)

This module continues to introduce the student to the theoretical foundations of counselling and psychotherapy. Throughout this module, the student will gain an understanding of the history and background of various counselling modalities, the theoretical underpinning of each modality, as well as the key theorists for each modality and their perspectives on personality development. In addition, the student will explore the implications of these perspectives on counselling interaction. While this module is primarily interested in the theoretical foundations of the different counselling modalities, rather than the application thereof, basic techniques, therapeutic goals, and processes will be addressed. This module focuses on the contextual issues facing counselling and psychotherapy in South Africa, the basic ethical principles requiring consideration in counselling, as well as the following approaches to counselling and psychotherapy: Behaviour Therapy; Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT); Cognitive Therapy; Choice Theory/Reality Therapy; Feminist Therapy; Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT); Narrative Therapy; Affirmative counselling practices; Family Therapy; and an integrative approach to therapy.

Interpersonal Communication Skills (NQF 5, 14 credits)

This module provides foundational knowledge, skills, and capabilities for effective interpersonal communication. Throughout this module, the student will gain a broad understanding of contemporary interpersonal theory and practice as well as a comprehensive skills-base to work effectively and efficiently with people from diverse backgrounds, with different abilities, and within a variety of contexts. The student will explore the varying ways in which individuals communicate and the various factors that directly and indirectly affect interpersonal relationships and the interpersonal communication process, such as emotions, (dis)ability, culture, conflict, and power relations.

Fundamentals of a Helping Relationship (NQF 5, 14 credits)

This module introduces the student to the essential skills embedded in the helping relationship and prepares the student with the fundamental skills for providing counselling support to others. The module lays a foundation for students in understanding the terminology, key concepts, and the relevant theoretical models related to the profession of counselling. It further teaches the student how to engage in helping relationships and the values that drive these relationships. The module focuses on core counselling skills, such as: attending skills, active listening skills, contracting skills, paraphrasing, summarising, identifying and reflecting feelings, asking questions, the skill of challenging, goal setting and evaluation, and supporting and encouraging the client. The student will explore the value of the counselling environment and the importance of becoming a reflexive practitioner. The Relational Skills Model will be unpacked and comprise of five phases, these are: (i) establishing the relationship, (ii) developing the relationship, (iii) working with the relationship, (iv) the established relationship, and (v) maintaining the relationship.

Community and Culture (NQF 5, 14 credits)

This module equips students with the skills and knowledge to understand, address, and promote mental health within South Africa's diverse community and cultural settings. Students will explore the intersection of cultural diversity and community well-being, delving into cultural competence and community mental health strategies. Emphasis is placed on understanding South Africa's diverse cultural practices and how culture influences mental health outcomes. Through case studies and practical exercises, students will learn how to design culturally sensitive, community-based mental health initiatives that foster resilience and well-being in vulnerable groups. The module also covers the state of community mental health care in South Africa, including the challenges, outcomes, and multi-sectoral strategies needed to make mental health services accessible and equitable. A key component of the module is fostering community engagement to drive positive mental health outcomes in schools, workplaces, and other community settings.

Developmental Psychology A (NQF 5, 14 credits)

Developmental Psychology A focuses on themes in developmental psychology and offers an overview of human development at various stages of life, including conception, infancy, childhood and adolescence. The module explores descriptions of specific aspects of human development, including physical, cognitive, personality, and social development. The following theoretical frameworks will be referred to when engaging with human development across the life-span: Freud's theory of psychosexual development, Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, and Piaget and Vygotsky's theories of cognitive development. The student will also be given the opportunity to explore the impact of socio-cultural contexts on human development, specifically within the South African context, as well as engage with the connection between their life experiences and the theories and process of human development.

Developmental Psychology B (NQF 6, 14 credits)

This module explores adult lifespan development and ageing within the framework of the major areas of development; inclusive of physical development, cognitive development, personality development, and social development. Key theoretical approaches will be discussed that explain adult development and ageing across the major areas of development. This module adopts a holistic approach to adult development and ageing through consideration of the challenges that people experience as they age, alongside its effects on the person's general health and well-being.

Facilitation Skills (NQF 6, 15 credits)

This module is designed to equip students with the essential facilitation skills necessary for organizing, conducting, and assessing group-based and psychoeducational workshops. It focuses on practical techniques for promoting participation, self-reflection, and behavioural change through well-structured, engaging, and culturally sensitive workshops. The course will cover the complete facilitation process: from the initial planning and workshop design to managing group dynamics, handling conflict, and delivering mental health presentations. Students will also learn to tailor their facilitation techniques to suit the needs of diverse South African communities, taking into account cultural, social, and psychological diversity. By the end of the module, students will have the tools to effectively lead psychoeducational workshops that foster personal growth, promote mental health awareness, and create meaningful change.

This module takes students through a step-by-step learning experience, starting with foundational facilitation principles, building practical skills for managing workshops, and culminating in hands-on workshop design and facilitation. The focus is on equipping students with not only theoretical knowledge but also practical strategies that can be applied in real-world settings.

Counselling Skills and Process Development (NQF 6, 14 credits)

This module builds on and consolidates counselling competencies gained in Fundamentals of a Helping Relationship and continues to develop the students counselling skills. The module addresses on a deeper level the counselling framework from Fundamentals of a Helping Relationship and places particular focus on the integration of Egan's Skilled Helper Model. The module provides students with an opportunity to further operationalize their helping skills through counselling role plays. Throughout the module, students will be taught to engage in a process of critical self-reflexivity as they sharpen their counselling skills.

Ethics in Counselling (NQF 6, 14 credits)

This module explores ethics in the helping professions. It aims to provide students with foundational knowledge about universal ethical principles, ethical reasoning and ethical decision-making models. The module cultivates a sense of ethical commitment in students, as they develop a growing awareness of ethical dilemmas and the impact of their own personal values and biases on the ethical decision-making process. The implications and considerations of applying ethics within a multicultural context will be discussed, as well as the role of ethics from a social justice perspective. This module requires the student's personal involvement and commitment to participate.

Crisis and Trauma Counselling (NQF 6, 14 credits)

This module explores the counselling context with particular reference to people who have experienced situations of crisis and trauma. The module provides the student with the knowledge and skills needed for the effective intervention and management of a crisis. In this module, students would be able to differentiate between a crisis and trauma, and the types of intervention strategies that each requires. This module explores the foundations of trauma counselling related to health, illness, death, the family context and the phenomenology of rape in South Africa. It further provides an understanding of the effects of indirect trauma and introduces the student to the following intervention strategies: brief interventions, cognitive behavioural counselling, narrative practices, and strengths-based interventions. Further areas of foci for this module include the exploration of ways to effectively manage behavioural and emotional responses to crisis and trauma contexts, the assessment of a person who has been exposed to crisis and trauma incidents, as well as how best to respond in such contexts, and when to refer the person for specialist services.

Creative Arts in Psychology (NQF 6, 15 credits)

This module focuses on Mindfulness and Positive Psychology in creative arts, delving into their various benefits in enhancing mental health, reducing stress, emphasising strengths, building positive relationships and cultivating healthier states of overall well-being through the focus on mind, body and spirit. By merging creative arts with mindfulness and positive psychology, mental health support workers can assist individuals to convey their thoughts and feelings through music, drama, dance and other art

forms which enhance emotional expression and support. The module emphasizes practical applications and cultural relevance in South Africa's diverse communities.

Digital and Telehealth Services (NQF 6, 14 credits)

This module provides an in-depth exploration of digital and telehealth services with a particular focus on mental health in South Africa. Students will examine how digital platforms, app-based services, and telehealth solutions are transforming access to healthcare, especially for underserved and rural populations. By understanding the growing field of digital health, students will learn how to conduct virtual consultations, deliver psychosocial support remotely, and ethically navigate the challenges of telehealth. Special emphasis will be placed on the legal and ethical guidelines of telehealth, as well as the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing digital healthcare delivery. By the end of the module, students will be equipped to design and deliver accessible, efficient, and ethical mental health services through digital platforms.

Work Integrated Learning (Part 1 and 2) (NQF 6, 20 credits)

Work Integrated Learning is regarded as a rewarding and essential component of a student's learning experience. SACAP's vision is to continue to grow and develop as a centre of excellence for education, research and personal and professional development in the field of applied psychology. An integral component of this vision is to establish links with various psychosocial organisations in the community services, health, welfare, etc. It is intended that such collaborative work will promote excellence in the education and training of students within these fields. The WIL module runs over the course of two academic terms and offers students a comprehensive practical placement within an organisational setting specifically related to various psychosocial fields.

Elective Modules

Addiction Counselling (NQF 6, 15 credits)

This elective module provides an overview of addiction, addiction models, and addiction counselling, by examining the theoretical models and counselling approaches used to understand, intervene and treat addictions. A differentiation between substance and non-substance related addictions (process addictions) are explored, providing clarification on the common features and defining characteristics of each. Students will be introduced to various screening tools for the assessment of addiction and learn about common co-occurring disorders. Crisis intervention, individual counselling, group counselling and family counselling will be explored when working in the context of addiction treatment. Treatment and aftercare issues as they relate to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and age, will be engaged with. Specific emphasis will be placed on the family of the addict and the children in the family system. Finally, this module concludes with insights into harm reduction, relapse prevention practices as well as 12-step self-help groups.

Counselling in Loss (NQF 6, 15 credits)

This module provides students with the knowledge, skills and attributes to effectively and appropriately work with those experiencing a variety of loss and grief issues. Students study the dynamics of the grieving process and the impact that cultural, social, and religious perspectives and beliefs have on the experience

of grief and loss. The module introduces the students to complicated, disenfranchised and ambiguous loss and how to work with and/or refer clients. The aim of the module is to assist the student to integrate their developing knowledge and understanding of the counselling process to confidently and appropriately counsel clients as they move through the grieving and loss process.

Family Work and Relationships (NQF 6, 15 credits)

The module introduces family theories and family therapies, with a focus on viewing the family from a systemic perspective. Various explanatory models will be explored with the aim of understanding family functioning, processes and relationships. This includes intergenerational family therapies, experiential family therapies, strategic family therapies, systemic family therapies, and postmodern family therapies. Students will be equipped with the knowledge and skill to formulate a comprehensive framework from which to work within a family context. This module further gives recognition to the complexities of diversity and multiculturalism that are present within families and various family forms. Furthermore, the module seeks to engage students in a discussion about indigenizing western family therapies for the South African context.

Gender, Sexuality and HIV Counselling (NQF 6, 15 credits)

This module offers a theoretical foundation of the key concepts embedded in the study of gender, sexuality and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). It further provides students with a good grounding of the issues related to gender, sexuality, and the current HIV discourses in South Africa. This module encourages the student to engage with contemporary material, that is exciting, challenging, and key to our fluid and dynamic identities, intimate relationships, and our social and cultural positions. The student is encouraged to engage in a process of critical self-reflection on their relationship with gender and sexuality in a counselling context. The student will grapple with the complexity of gender-related challenges and the importance of gender and sexuality in a variety of social contexts and circumstances. Additionally, this module scrutinises gender discourses with respect to persons whose gender identities, and/or behaviours are dissimilar from traditional binary gender roles. This module further explores how gender fluidity and non-conforming genders and identities are currently expressed within the South African context. Finally, this module will address the contemporary landscape of HIV, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections in South Africa, with special reference to prevention, antiretroviral (ARV) compliance, and the impact of the disclosure of HIV status with specific reference to the adolescent population.

Sports Psychology (NQF 6, 15 credits)

This module introduces the student to the field of sport psychology. This module covers the essential topics pertaining to sport psychology and will enable the student in profiling the athlete, so as to better understand the drivers behind the athlete's performance. The application of psychological theory and research within the context of sport will enable the student to assist athletes and/or coaches improve the athlete's performance and enjoyment in sport. This module concludes with teaching students how to conceptualise and develop a psychological and physical skills training programme.

Working with Children and Adolescents (NQF 6, 15 credits)

Children and adolescents have distinct physical, cognitive and emotional characteristics. As such, the counselling context of young people is unique and different from the counselling context of adults. The

differences will be explored in this module with the nuances emphasised and explained. The first few sessions of the module aim to provide students with a theoretical and conceptual framework from which to understand the development and context of young people and moves toward a more practical exploration of the counselling process with a focus on developmentally sensitive counselling skills, the different child-and-adolescent-friendly ways of working with young people in counselling, how to incorporate different forms of media and play in counselling, and fostering an awareness of the ethical dilemmas which they may face. Students are encouraged to think creatively and to develop child-and-adolescent-friendly strategies that will enhance communication and understanding when working with this population. Specific challenges which young people may face, including the family break up, grief, trauma, child abuse, violence, bullying and self-harm, are discussed.