

# COUNSELLOR SKILL ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK



All case studies in this text are presented as examples only  
and any comparison which might be made with persons either  
living or dead is purely coincidental.

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# INSTRUCTIONS

# Instructions

This booklet contains all questions that you are required to complete as part of this written exam component.

**This is a question booklet only. You are required to answer all of the questions on your own paper.**

**When answering the questions, please ensure the following:**

- 1. You clearly write your name, address, student number and day time telephone number on the first page of your answer sheets.**
- 2. You clearly number each page, each section and each question.**
- 3. If hand-writing your answers please use pen only. Pencil is not acceptable.**
- 4. You strictly adhere to the maximum word count. (Answers that extend 10% beyond the allocated word count will not be marked).**

*Please note that a word count is not provided for questions that ask you to 'list' a certain number of things (but short responses are assumed).*

- 5. You ensure that all of your answer pages are stapled together and are in the correct order.**

Once you have completed all answers, please post them to the following address:

Address: The Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors  
Locked Bag 15  
FORTITUDE VALLEY Q 4006

Thank you for choosing The Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors. *Good Luck!*

*Section 1*  
**COMMUNICATION  
SKILLS**

# Communication Skills

1. Explain the importance of effective communication in the counselling process. (200 words)
2. Outline the key micro-skills a counsellor utilises as part of the process of effective listening and communication. (150 words)
3. Explain how certain questioning skills can lead to a defensive response from clients. (150 words)
4. Explain the difference between open and closed questions and outline their use in counselling. (150 words)
5. Provide four examples of open questions.
6. Provide four examples of closed questions.
7. Consider the following client statement:

*I feel great! I've finally done it. I've quit my job! I was just so frustrated at work, I couldn't take it any more. It's OK though, because the next week I picked up a job closer to home and more pay! I can't believe it, I feel like a weight's been lifted off my shoulders. I just couldn't see it before. Here I was worrying all the time when I should have moved on long ago. I felt pretty scared for a couple of days though, feeling sorry for myself, not knowing how long I'd be out of work. But hey, look, both my wife and I are on top of the world!*

Write a statement that reflects this client's feeling.

8. Read through the following scenario:

*Nellie is a day visitor at an aged care facility. Nellie's husband, Reg, died last week. She is now sitting alone in the corner at the centre's common room. The centre's Counsellor approaches Nellie and the following dialogue takes place.*

(i) Counsellor: *Hello Nellie. (Smiles, then sits beside Nellie)*

Nellie: *(Quick glance and smile at the counsellor then looks at door and window. Sitting on edge of chair, hands knotted in lap.)*

(ii) Counsellor: *You look a bit worried, Nellie.*

Nellie: *Reg was always there. We were married for 62 years and we hardly spent more than a weekend apart at any one time.*

(iii) Counsellor: *Yes, you two were like salt & pepper.*

Nellie: *He was always there. You know, at night. Now I hear every bump and squeak. The neighbourhood's not as it used to be. I can't keep up with the young ones. New people moving in and out all the time.*

(iv) Counsellor: *Your neighbourhood has changed. And now that Reg has passed-on you feel rather alone and frightened at night.*

Nellie: *It's silly of me, I know. But I hardly slept last night. Tony, that's my son, he's over in the Eastern Suburbs. An hour by car. If I had an intruder, or if my hip went on me again, I couldn't get to the phone in the kitchen. I don't know what would become of me! But Dear, I'm not ready for the hostel.*



- (v) *Counsellor:*                    *You feel unsafe in your own home, yet you see yourself as too active for the aged hostel.*
- Nellie:*                                    *Too right! In there I'd go even sillier than I am now! (chuckles) Do you think one of those pendant alert gadgets would suit me?*
- (vi) *Counsellor:*                    *Sure.*
- Nellie:*                                    *I don't want to trouble anyone but I don't know how to find out about them. Reg was the gadget man.*
- (vii) *Counsellor:*                    *Good on you, Nellie, for speaking up about this. Our Coordinator has brochures on those pendants. I'll get you a brochure and we can look through it together. Ok?*
- Nellie:*                                    *Oh, thank you so much, Dear. (face lights up, reaches over and clasps counsellor's hand)*

For each of the counsellor statements (i - viii) answer the following:

- a) What skill is the counsellor using?
- b) What is the purpose of using the skill at that point in the counselling dialogue?

9. Consider the following client inconsistencies and identify whether the client has displayed:

- a) Inconsistency between non-verbal behaviours.
- b) Inconsistency between verbal messages
- c) Inconsistencies between verbal message and non-verbal (body) message

**Client A.**                    A client states: *“My mother is always such a giving woman, but she doesn't express any love for me.”*

**Client B.**                    The client says she is feeling happy and yet she is slumped in the chair and has red eyes which seems to indicate that she has been crying.

**Client C.**                    A client is smiling but their fist is tightly clenched

10. The diagram below is an example model for the stages involved in a counselling session.

Use the following stages in the model to explain what communication skills you would employ to effectively facilitate each stage:

1. rapport building,
2. data gathering,
3. determining goals,
4. generating alternative solutions, and
5. generalizing



11. Consider the following client statement:

*“I just broke up with my boyfriend Diago and I feel pretty awful. He wanted to get married and have kids, but I didn’t. I still want to be friends but he won’t have anything to do with me. My friends think I made the wrong decision.”*

Write four statements that a counsellor could make in response to this client that focus on the following:

1. the client’s feeling
2. the client’s thoughts and feelings
3. the problem
4. other people

***Section 2***

**ETHICS AND THE  
COUNSELLING INTERVIEW**

# Ethics and the counselling interview

1. Explain how a counsellor should structure their initial session with a client (please include details about the way in which a counsellor would begin building rapport, how they would structure the session, what information should be provided to the client and other significant details). (500 words)
2. Write a script for the way in which a counsellor should explain to a client the ethical and professional limits of confidentiality. Please write your script word-for-word as a counsellor would speak to a client. (200 words)
3. What should a counsellor do if a client presents with more than one concern or complaint? (50 words)
4. Explain what the counsellor's ethical and professional obligations are in regard to the following scenarios (200 words each):
  - a) A teenage client (boy, age 17) tells the counsellor that he is using illegal drugs and selling them to his peers.
  - b) A client (woman, 34) tells the counsellor that she has been shop-lifting regularly at the local shopping centre.
  - c) A client (man, age 42) tells the counsellor that he gets so frustrated with his young children that sometimes he feels like "killing them".
5. Explain the purpose of a professional code of ethics. (150 words)
6. Explain in your own words what is meant by the following statement: (100 words)

*"Acting ethically means being as competent as professed, considering the client's welfare as predominant, using power responsibly, and conducting oneself so as to enhance the reputation of the profession."\**

7. Read through the following scenario and answer the question that follows:

*Stewart attended counselling as he was feeling very overwhelmed in a new position in his company. Whilst he had initially fought to obtain the position and had been looking forward to the extra responsibility and duties, he was finding that since taking on the position four months ago, he was not coping. He was feeling tired all the time, pessimistic and unmotivated about what he could achieve, wasn't eating or sleeping well and was experiencing rapid mood changes. After conducting a thorough assessment of Stewart, the counsellor develops a comprehensive stress management program. This plan incorporates stress management techniques and daily exercise. Together, Stewart and the counsellor discuss how the plan could be integrated into Stewart's life. Stewart left the counselling session eager to implement the new plan. Stewart, however did not implement these techniques and eventually was fired from his job because of his continuing inability to cope.*

Did the counsellor breach their duty-of-care in this scenario? Explain your answer. (150 words)

\* *Reference - Welfel, E. R. (1998). Ethics in counseling and psychotherapy: Standards, research and emerging issues. Wadsworth.*

8. For each of the following scenarios, explain what ethical obligation the counsellor has not met. (50 words each)

Scenario A

*A counsellor has been working with their client for several weeks concerning her marriage difficulties. It is agreed that the client's husband will attend counselling, which the husband is happy to do. The counsellor obtains the husband's informed consent and begins the session. The wife however becomes upset in their first interview together when the counsellor reveals some issues she would have preferred were kept private.*

Scenario B

*A client has been in therapy for nearly 12 months. During that time, the counsellor has been focusing on using cognitive behaviour therapy to address the client's issues. The counsellor has recently attended a seminar on Gestalt therapy and is very excited about using some of the Gestalt experiments in their next session with their client. The counsellor introduces these techniques with little explanation and the client becomes agitated and distressed.*

Scenario C

*A trainee counsellor working for a large private practice omits to discuss fees before commencement of the counselling interview with a client who is financially disadvantaged. On inquiring, the trainee counsellor is advised that the practice's billing policy, does not include fee relief. The client misses their next appointment and on meeting again at the interview, the counsellor is embarrassed to have to bill the client for three sessions, which includes the session missed, at the rate set by the practice, knowing that the client cannot afford to pay.*

9. Consider the following case scenarios which provide examples of confidentiality violations. For each scenario explain: (150 words each)

- How the counsellor violated the client's confidentiality
- How the counsellor could have protected the client's confidentiality (ie. How the situation could have been handled differently)

Scenario A

*A counsellor is interviewing a client when they receive an urgent phone call from one of their other clients whose case they are managing. This client is very distraught as she is in the process of being evicted from her home. She asks the counsellor to speak to the landlord on her behalf to try and forestall the eviction. Through forthright discussions with the landlord, the counsellor is able to negotiate a temporary stay until their agency can arrange emergency housing for the client. After 10 minutes or so, the counsellor completes the call and returns to the interview.*

Scenario B

*It is lunchtime and the counsellor and his colleague are in a busy café sharing a bite to eat. Naturally the discussion turns to work and they both discuss the current cases they are working on.*

10. Consider the following scenarios and identify whether you think the referral is for therapeutic or non-therapeutic reasons. You will need to support your views. (150 words each)

Scenario A

*A client says in her first appointment that she is hoping to bring her husband to future sessions to address their relationship issues. The counsellor explains that she is not qualified or experienced enough to work with couples and they agree to refer the client to a relationship counselling service.*

Scenario B

*A counsellor has been working with a client for three sessions. The counsellor does not look forward to the sessions with this client as she feels that the client is annoying and difficult to work with. She decides the client would be better suited to another counsellor in the service and plans to recommend this to the client.*

12. Read through the scenario below and answer the questions that follow:

*Michael is a counsellor with a small government-funded counselling agency. The agency provides free ongoing counselling for clients below a set income level. As a result, each client completes an intake form where they must state their income level prior to their first counselling appointment. Michael has been working with Greta concerning problems she is having with her adolescent daughter. In their fourth appointment, Greta describes her husband's executive position and mentions his high salary. When Michael questions Greta about this, he discovers that Greta thought that she only needed to put her part-time salary on the intake form, rather than their total household income. Michael tells Greta that as a result she may not qualify for this counselling service and he will check the agency's policy before the next appointment. Greta tells Michael that she would be happy to pay for the appointments if necessary.*

*At the beginning of their fifth appointment, Michael informs Greta that she is not eligible for the service and unfortunately it is agency policy that he needs to refer her to another service provider. Greta is distraught as she feels she has already spent so much time telling Michael about what's happening and she doesn't want to start with someone new. Michael advises Greta that he can fax file notes to the new service to save her repeating her story. Michael has also prepared a list of appropriate resources and some information on what each service offers. They discuss the services and agree that Greta will go to a nearby Family Service where Michael knows one of the workers, Susie. Michael faxes Greta's file notes to the Family Service and asks Susie to ring Greta to organise an appointment within a week.*

*Three weeks later, Michael contacts Susie to see how Greta is going. Susie explains that she was unable to make an appointment with Greta because she is only available at the Centre two days a week and they were both days when Greta was not available.*

- a) Did Michael maintain his confidentiality to Greta? Explain your answer. (100 words)
- b) What process did Michael complete to obtain informed consent from Greta? What other steps could he have taken? (150 words)
- c) How could Michael have improved the quality of the service that the Family Service agency provided to Greta? (150 words)
- d) Did this referral occur at the most effective and appropriate time in the counselling process? Yes/No – Why? (100 words)

12. What could Michael have done to make this referral more effective while ensuring that he maintained his ethical standards? (100 words)

13. What is a dual-role relationship? (50 words)

14. Consider the following case scenario.

*You and your client have developed a strong rapport over the months that you have been meeting. During a session, this client presents you with a bunch of flowers to thank you for your support and assistance. You graciously accept these flowers and display them in your office.*

*A few weeks later you receive tickets to a concert from this same client. The client explains that he handles many large advertising and sponsorship accounts and that it is common practice for promoters to give advertisers and sponsors free tickets, as a way of thanking them and also to keep their business. He often has spare tickets and loves giving them away because the tickets get used and it costs him nothing. He tells you that he mailed them to you because you happened to mention that you are a fan of the performer.*

*Not long after, you receive gift vouchers to a day spa from this client. Again, the client insists that they are purely to say thank you for all of your assistance and support.*

Describe the moral and ethical dilemmas you, as the counsellor, are facing. (50 words)

15. How would you resolve them? (50 words)

16. Explain how the social system in which a **client** lives affects their development in terms of values, beliefs, behaviours and how they respond to emotional experiences. (100 words)

(Note: The term “social system” in this instance refers to factors such as race, culture, gender, sexuality, politics, religion, ethics and class)

17. Explain how the social system in which a **counsellor** lives affects their perception of client issues, concerns and behaviours. (100 words)

18. Outline how the social systems that a client and counsellor live in can impact on the process of counselling. (50 words)

19. What factors do you need to consider when counselling a client whose cultural background differs significantly from your own?





***Section 3***  
**ANALYSING  
COUNSELLING  
APPROACHES**

# Analysing Counselling Approaches

For this section you are required to select **six** core counselling approaches to focus on. Please select your approaches carefully. You will be required to use these same six approaches when responding to case studies (in next section) and in your practical assessment (to be completed once you obtain competency in this written component).

Below is a list of example approaches that you may select. Please note that you are not limited to these approaches, however, your choice of approach must be considered a recognised approach in counselling or psychotherapy.

Examples of approaches:

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Solution Focused/Solution Oriented Therapy | 6. Family Therapy                   |
| 2. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy                | 7. Couple/Relationships Counselling |
| 3. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy         | 8. Grief and Trauma Counselling     |
| 4. Person Centred/Rogerian Approach           | 9. Adlerian Therapy                 |
| 5. Gestalt Therapy                            | 10. Transactional Therapy           |
|   | 11. Reality Therapy                 |
|   | 12. Jungian Therapy                 |
|   | 13. Narrative Therapy               |

- Clearly list the six approaches you have selected.
- For each approach you are required to write a short essay (**800 words**) that covers the following key points in regard to the selected counselling approach:
  - **Historical development** – eg. What are the theoretical origins of the approach and how has it evolved over time?
  - **Concepts, techniques and key terminology** – eg. What are the key concepts, techniques and related terminology?
  - **How does change work?** – eg. According to the theory of the approach, how does change happen?
  - **Application** – eg. How is the approach best applied? When is it most relevant? Are there specific client groups that will benefit from this approach more than others?
  - **Benefits and limitations** – eg. What are benefits/advantages of the approach? What are the limitations/disadvantages of the approach?

*Please note for this section you are writing six separate essays: one essay per approach. Please make sure each essay is labelled clearly with the name of the approach at the top of the first page.*
- Select two approaches from the six you have chosen and write an essay (500 words) that compares the approaches in relation to the theory of how change happens.
- Select two approaches from the six you have chosen and write an essay (500 words) that compares their relevance in relation to issues and client groups, eg. Is one approach better suited than the other to particular issues (eg. anxiety, stress, depression) or client groups (eg. children, families, adolescents, groups, couples)?

***Section 4***  
**APPLYING  
COUNSELLING  
APPROACHES**

# Applying Counselling Approaches

For this section you are required to use the six approaches you selected in Section 3 and apply them to case study scenarios.

Included at the back of this booklet is a series of ten case studies. Please take the time to read through each case study and select the ones you would like to focus on for this section.

You will need to select a case study to use per approach but you may choose to use the same case study several times over.

For example:

You may have selected the following six counselling approaches:

1. Solution Focused Therapy
2. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
3. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy
4. Person Centred/Rogerian Approach
5. Gestalt Therapy
6. Adlerian Therapy

You like case studies 2 (John), 4 (Pamela), and 5 (Mick), so you choose to apply them as follows:

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| 1. Solution Focused Therapy -           | John   |
| 2. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy -        | Pamela |
| 3. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy - | John   |
| 4. Person Centred/Rogerian Approach -   | John   |
| 5. Gestalt Therapy -                    | Mick   |
| 6. Adlerian Therapy -                   | Pamela |

You may use any combination of case study and approach as you like. You simply need to make your selection clear.

You should title each essay using the following format:

**Example:**

**Solution Focused Therapy**  
**Applied to Case Study 2 (John)**

Once you have selected your case studies and decided which of your six approaches you will apply to each case study, you are ready to begin your first essay.

For each case study you are required to write a **1000 word** essay that interprets the case from the approach you have chosen. Each essay must cover the following:

1. The presenting concerns of the case.
2. What is the theoretical basis for the presenting concern(s), according to the theoretical underpinning of the approach you are focusing on?
3. Determine appropriate techniques for addressing the presenting concerns (techniques must align with the underpinning theory of the approach you are focusing on).
4. Outline the skills and techniques you would adopt in the counselling sessions (in alignment with the approach you have selected).
5. Address each of the following in relation to the approach you are focusing on:
  - how would you start the session?
  - how would you identify the concerns of the client?
  - what is your role as the counsellor?
  - how is the session structured?
  - is the client required to do any particular tasks after the session has ended?
  - what signs would indicate improvement for the client?

**Important note:** The case studies provided at the back of this booklet are a guide to get you started. Depending on the approach you take, you may find that you would like or need additional information.

Please be reassured that you can make assumptions and develop the scenario in more depth. (You may, for example, like to assume that Tom (Case Study 1) has a younger sister that would be willing to participate in a family therapy session with Tom and their mother. This is an acceptable assumption to make.) Nonetheless, when making assumptions or embellishing the scenario, please make sure that you maintain the central issues of the case study.



***Section 5***  
**CONCLUDING  
COUNSELLING**

# Concluding Counselling

1. How should a counsellor prepare a client for the eventual end of the counselling relationship? (100 words)
2. What sort of feedback (if any) should a counsellor seek from their clients? (50 words)
3. It is important for a counsellor to have a wide network of referral options. Why? (50 words)
4. Explain how you would manage a situation in which your client expresses deep sadness over the ending of the counselling relationship? (100 words)
5. Consider the following case study:

*You have been counselling Yvonne for the last three months and in that time she has made considerable progress in regard to the issues she initially presented with. You introduce the idea that counselling may not be required for too much longer. As Yvonne hears what you are saying she begins to react in anger saying that it was “typical”, that you are “just like everyone else” and “can’t handle getting close to her”. She adds, “Just when things are going so well you decide to abandon me too”. Yvonne has been clearly emotionally affected by your suggestion to end the counselling relationship.*

Explain how you would manage this situation. (150 words)

6. Outline the process of effective referral. (100 words)



***Section 6***  
**SUPERVISION, SELF-CARE  
AND REFLECTION**

# Supervision, Self-Care and Reflection

1. What is supervision and why should counsellors participate in it? (100 words)
2. Explain why self-care is relevant to the counselling professional. (100 words)
3. List six self-care strategies.
4. How can a counsellor evaluate the effectiveness of their service? (100 words)
5. You have decided to design a questionnaire to complete *yourself* after each counselling session. What questions could you ask yourself to assist you in reflecting on your performance? List five questions.
6. You are designing a brief questionnaire for *clients* to complete after each counselling session with you. What questions could you ask them? List five questions.
7. List five strategies that a counsellor could use to reflect upon the effectiveness of their work.
8. Explain why understanding personal biases and values is important for the counselling professional. (100 words)

# **APPENDIX A**

## **CASE STUDIES**

# CASE STUDY 1 – TOM

Tom's father (Des) died from a heart attack five months ago. Tom is 25 years old and has been estranged from his father for over five years.

His father's death has had an unexpected impact on Tom, who finds himself exhibiting very intimidating and aggressive behaviour toward his colleagues and friends. Tom had always been very sensitive and introverted so this is significantly out of character for him. He has assumed that this behaviour is in some way connected to his father's death but is not sure how to stop it.

Tom has not shed a tear over his father's death and is mostly concerned for his mother and her grief. Tom's father was a very intimidating man who ruled the house through a fear campaign. Despite this, Tom's mother stayed by his side til the end.

Although Tom has not spoken with his father for over five years he has had moderate contact with his mother. Tom is by nature an emotionally withdrawn man, who has difficulty expressing his emotions – a consequence he has surmised from a childhood of not letting his father see that he's hurt him or give him the satisfaction of seeing him cry.

## **CASE STUDY 2 – JOHN**

John was devastated when he arrived at the hospital and was told it was too late to see his wife, Gayle. None of the resuscitation attempts had worked. John felt it was all his fault; he could have prevented this if only he had spent more time at home with his family rather than working all of the time; he could have noticed warning signs earlier and taken her to the doctor. He had worked so hard to give Gayle and Ryan (their only child) the lifestyles they deserved. Now he was left with no wife and a son he hardly knows. He feels extremely isolated and doesn't know what to say to Ryan as he doesn't want to make the situation worse. The last thing John wants is for his son to see him vulnerable.

John went to church occasionally when Gayle had managed to convince him. He felt that his wife being taken away was a higher power trying to teach him a lesson about life.

John does not have many friends outside of his work place and even those are more like associates. Gayle was his best friend.

# CASE STUDY 3 – JARED AND THE BENTON FAMILY

Jared Benton is a 15 year old boy who has reluctantly agreed with his parents' request to come to counselling because of his aggressive behaviour at home and at school. Jared's dad, Andrew, and stepmother, Melissa, are worried because his recent conduct at school has led to him being permanently excluded. Jared now goes out during the day and argues with his dad and stepmother if they ask where he is going. He returns in the evening and spends time on his computer. If he is disturbed, he becomes very hostile and swears and shouts at Andrew and Melissa. Andrew feels that Jared has no respect for Melissa at all and is aware that Jared is less aggressive when he is home, although Jared still has frequent outbursts.

Melissa feels she has no control over Jared and is worried about being at home alone with him as when he gets mad at her, he has started to lash out and throw things. Jared concludes that some of the aggression builds because his stepmother is constantly nagging at him to get off the computer and this puts him off his game.

The situation escalated at home a couple of weeks ago when Jared became so frustrated by his Stepmother affecting his concentration on his computer game that he threw the console and broke it, amongst other things in his room. Jared was upset by this afterwards as he felt he had no control over his aggression and frustration and has broken valuable belongings that he saved for by working part time with his dad over the school holidays.

Jared does not want to go back to school as he gets too annoyed at the teachers telling him what to do all the time.

Andrew and Melissa mention that he was never an aggressive child and only started being so hostile a few years ago. They are extremely concerned about Jared's future.

## CASE STUDY 4 – PAMELA

Pamela is very proud of her career. She explains how she has worked harder than those around her in her male dominated industry to get where she is today. She has had to sacrifice a lot over the years but Pamela is adamant that those sacrifices were worth it – and so are the long working hours.

She looks around at what her female friends have though and sometimes is a little jealous that they have settled down and had families.

Pamela is single and very independent. She describes herself as a perfectionist and she is aware that she agonizes over being “good enough” at work. Her social life was one of her sacrifices. She only has a few close friends left; she doesn’t feel as though she can associate with most people.

She has come to counselling because her parents and friends have noticed that over a period of months, she has lost a lot of weight and Pamela says they have described her as looking “ill”.

Pamela knows she has always been fastidious about her diet but admits that this has become an obsession and food is starting to become abhorrent to her. She has been existing on one small meal at lunch time, so her co workers do not suspect that she is severely limiting her food intake. Recently though, she has only been eating an apple at lunch time. She says she keeps going by drinking coffee; this gives her the energy to tackle the latest project.

She has noticed a decline in the quality of her work because she is becoming disorganized. Her restrictive eating patterns are impinging on her job and she is concerned that she cannot face eating enough to allow her to keep the most important thing in her life; her career.

## CASE STUDY 5 – MICK

Mick is a 65 year old retired farmer. He sold his farm just over a year ago and moved with his wife, Barbara, closer to the city where their son and daughter-in-law live. He decided to sell up after Barbara said they were getting too old to run a working farm. They are about a 40 minute drive from where their son, daughter-in-law and their 2 children, a boy aged 12 and a girl aged 5, live. Mick and Barbara have not seen much of them as the journey from the farm took over 6 hours.

Mick has had mild bouts of depression before but this time it has overwhelmed him. Since the house move, Mick's activity levels have dropped enormously. Without the farm, it is hard for Mick to find things to keep him active and entertained; his whole life, his identity, was built around the farm. He spends most of his day sat in front of the television and goes for the occasional walk to the corner shop to buy a newspaper. His sedentary lifestyle is worrying Barbara, who says it is like he has just "stopped". He has gone from doing extreme labour to being lost about what to do with himself. Barbara keeps herself busy by doing housework, going for walks, visiting the grandchildren and she's started going to a yoga class nearby twice a week.

Mick says he is feeling more isolated than he did on the farm. With the depression taking over, Mick doesn't want the grandchildren to remember their grandad as being miserable and worthless so he avoids seeing them as much as possible. This has created tension between Mick and his daughter-in-law, who thinks he's just being aloof.

Mick would desperately like to be involved in his family's lives and also to feel less isolated in his marriage.



## CASE STUDY 6 – STEVE AND MARY

Steve and Mary fell in love and married. They often spoke of having children but first wanted to ensure they were financially secure so that Mary could take time off to be with the children and vice versa if Steve wanted to apply for paternal leave.

In the meantime they bought a lovely home and furnished it, and went on several holidays together. Both Steve and Mary had fantastic careers. They seemed to be climbing the corporate ladder and friends would comment on their playful but competitive natures. Life was close to perfect.

Talk in their marriage returned to children. Steve and Mary wanted children, but Mary didn't want to take a break from her career. Steve was concerned about maintaining the high mortgage repayments on one wage.

Through discussions Mary felt that Steve wanted her to somehow have a child but still retain her wage. Mary felt that Steve could take a part-time second job to support her while she had his child.

Over a period of time they stopped talking, concentrating on their careers and leading separate lives. They took up different hobbies, Mary played tennis and Steve played squash. Mary went to the movies with the girls and Steve went to the pub with the boys. Eventually, they moved into separate bedrooms. They have become disengaged.

It is Mary who makes the initial call to the counsellor. She feels a nagging sense of discontent about her life and her relationship with Steve. She is hoping counselling will help resolve this.

# CASE STUDY 7 – DAVID

David Li is a 32 year-old-male who emigrated with his family from Shanghai, China to Australia when he was five years of age. Growing up, his parents ensured a traditional Chinese upbringing and David now maintains strong cultural links and wishes to bring his children up this way also.

He is now married with three young children and is attending counselling for his issues with prescribed medication. David is a qualified doctor working in a very busy suburban hospital. Recently, another doctor caught him stealing medication from the hospital he works at and the hospital have agreed to let him stay on if he gets some help and takes six months unpaid leave to do so.

His addiction started when he was approximately 24 years of age and started working as an intern. He was struggling under the pressure of working as an intern, being newly married with a young child as well as the pressure he felt from his extended family to help financially support his family. He started taking anti-anxiety medication and medication to keep him awake to work the long shifts at the hospital. Through the years, he started needing more and more medication and although he thought he had it under control, he was not able to function without the medication every day.

His family are unaware of the situation and he does not want them to know for fear of shaming the family. He does not know how he is going to face them if they find out. He is also very concerned about his finances as he is not being paid at the moment and not only has to support his wife and three children but also his parents, uncle and aunty and cousins that live with him.

## CASE STUDY 8 – RACHEL

Rachel is a 14 year old girl who has recently been caught shoplifting. She was reported to her school by a shopkeeper who recognised her uniform and had caught her stealing clothes. The police were also informed and gave Rachel a caution at the police station. Her father and step-mother were appalled, having caught her previously with other pupils' property in her school bag earlier in the year. She was banned from going out with her friends and was given extra chores. After promising she would never steal again, she was allowed to see her friends again and the chores went back to normal.

The first time Rachel had been caught stealing was when she had just turned twelve; just over two years ago. She has been caught on seven occasions since then, including her most recent incident. Her step-mother suspects she has stolen on more occasions than this and doesn't believe that the first time she was caught was the first time she'd stolen.

This is the first time that Rachel has stolen from a shop though; this information is agreed upon by both Rachel and her parents. All parties agree that this is the most serious incident so far. Rachel says that she knows stealing is wrong and her parents have tried drumming this into her. Having the police involved in the most recent episode of stealing made her realise that she could get into trouble with people other than her parents and teachers, but "the police were softer" on her than her parents and teachers ever had been.

## CASE STUDY 9 – BEN

Ben is 27 years old and lives with his partner (Trisha) in the inner city. Both Ben and Trisha are career driven and hard working. Ben works as an architect for a small but busy firm. By nature an introspective and quiet man, Ben has noticed over the last few months that he is experiencing mild anxiety related symptoms: sweating palms and a quickened heart-rate. These symptoms happen quite often at work, but for no reason that is obvious or apparent to Ben. Trisha has noticed that Ben has become less interested in going out and socialising, preferring instead to stay in and work on his computer or research the stock market.

Ben has a close relationship with his younger brother Charlie, although they are fiercely competitive. Over the last few years Charlie's life has bloomed. He received a much wanted promotion and pay rise at work, he got married and his wife is now expecting their first child. Ben has never wished to have Charlie's life, but lately he is starting to feel resentful and irritated by Charlie's seeming good-fortune. This too has worried Ben who feels he is growing "bitter" in a number of areas of his life.

Ben was overlooked for a promotion six months ago and now wonders if architecture is really his thing. He would also love to propose to Trisha, but knows that Trisha has no interest in marriage or having a family.

Being reflective by nature, Ben wonders whether counselling might assist him in managing his feelings of anxiousness and the building resentment he feels towards others' good fortune.

# CASE STUDY 10 – THE WALKER FAMILY

The Walker family consists of Mum (Sheila), Dad (Bryan) and their two teenage sons Matthew and Shane (16 and 14, respectively). Sheila and Bryan have always had their concerns about the behaviour of Matthew, who has been a very sullen teenager and has a history of drug-taking. Sheila blames Bryan, who also had a history of drug-taking, for not taking a harsh enough stance with Matthew; Bryan would talk about the 'good old days' with his mates - they would go out and try various 'highs'.

Bryan has no influence over Matthew as he gets called a 'hypocrite' whenever he tries to talk to Matthew about the dangers of drugs. Sheila cannot be calm enough to talk rationally to Matthew, she just screams and shouts at him. The situation is becoming increasingly intolerable and the family have persuaded Matthew to attend counselling. Their recent discovery that Matthew has cajoled his younger brother, Shane, into trying amphetamines has put the family into crisis. Sheila and Bryan are keen for Matthew to attend counselling as soon as possible.