**6.6 Explain why research findings are important in counselling work.**

The purpose of this criterion is a gentle introduction and overview for what constitutes research and some understanding of how research informs counselling work. A general introduction of different research strategies, such as the difference between the use of surveys, questionnaires and interviewing for example, would be adequate for this level.

At this level it would be helpful to introduce some research articles that demonstrate how research supports counselling outcomes for clients across the different theoretical models, and how research impacts on funding and policy e.g. how research has been used to support the predominance of the Cognitive Behavioural Model (CBT) model within the National Health Service (NHS).

Some suggested learning ideas:

1.    As an introduction to everyday use of research invite the group to work in small groups to brainstorm how they would research buying a car.
       **Aim:** for candidates to think about the process of how they research buying a commercial product and link this as an introduction to the process of counselling research.

- Why would you want to research different products?
- What would <u>you</u> be looking for?
- How would you go about researching the pros and cons of each product?
- How would the research help you decide?

In group feedback acknowledge how much candidates already know about research from everyday experience and link to counselling research as a means of exploring the pros and cons of counselling practice and how it may be used to understand what works and what may not be fully effective.

2.    In small groups invite candidates to think about an area related to counselling they may want to know about and what they would be looking to find out e.g. evidence for how successful counselling is with clients in general or a particular client group, or comparing CBT with Person Centred counselling to identify which has better outcomes.

In their groups think about how they might go about researching the question: i.e. use of surveys, questionnaires. **They are not going to undertake the research** and there is no right answer. The exercise is designed to get candidates to think about the process of counselling research.

3.    Bring in some research articles and in small groups invite candidates to consider:

- What was the aim of the research?
- Does the research focus on a particular client group?

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- Is the research located within a particular theoretical model?
- How was the research undertaken?
- What were the findings of the research?
- What are the implications of the findings for the counsellor?
- Does the research findings have wider implications e.g. for funding, government policy, agency policy?

Example assignment:

1) With reference to a counselling article, how do research findings support counselling work?

Target length: 1000 - 1200 words

The assignment should examine what is meant by research and how it informs and supports counselling work. The purpose of the assignment is NOT to engage in doing research or to be familiar with research methodology, but to examine how a simple piece of research has informed some aspect of counselling and/or client outcome. For the assignment it would be useful to consider the following:

- What is research?
- What are different types of research methods e.g. use of questionnaires, surveys, interviews.
- How does research show what works for the client in counselling practice?
- What was the aim of the research?
- Does the research focus on a particular client group?
- Is the research located within a particular theoretical model?
- How did they undertake the research?
- What were the findings of the research?
- What are the implications of the findings for the counsellor?
- Do the research findings have wider implications e.g. for funding, government policy, agency policy?
- Do you think the research is reliable or leads to further questions?
- In what way was the research useful?

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**Suggested Resources:**

**Short articles:**

Tait, A. (2021) 'It was devastating': what happens when therapy makes things worse? *The Guardian* Available at: https://amp.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/jul17/it-was-devasting-what-happens-when-therapy-makes-things-worse

UNICEF,. (2011). UNICEF report on child wellbeing. Therapy Today. 22(8), p.5.

**Longer articles:**

Garrett, C. "There is beauty in diversity in all areas of life including neurological diversity" (Bella): A mixed method study into how new thoughts on neurodiversity are influencing psychotherapists' practice. *Z Psychodrama Soziom* **21** (Suppl 1), 147–161 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11620-021-00638-5

Ross, S., Agrawal, M., Griffiths, R.R., Grob, C., Berger, A. and Henningfield, J.E. (2022) Psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy to treat psychiatric and existential istress in life-threatening medical illnesses and palliative care *Neuropharmacology,* Vol 216, pp1-5

Savic-Jabrow, P,C., 2010. Where do counsellors in private practice receive their support? A pilot study. Counselling & Psychotherapy Research: Linking Research with Practice. 10 (3), p.229

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**Books:**

Cooper, M., (2008). *Essential Research Findings in Counselling and Psychotherapy: The Facts are Friendly.* 1st ed. London: Sage

McLeod, J., (2003). *Doing Counselling Research.* 2nd ed. Sage Publications Ltd

McLeod, J. (2019) *An Introduction to Counselling and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice* London: Open University Press

Midgley, N., Hayes, J. and Cooper, M. (2017) *Essential Research Findings in Child and Adolescent Counselling and Psychotherapy* London: Sage

Sanders, P & Wilkins, P. (2010). *First Steps in Practitioner Research: A guide to understanding and doing research in counselling and health and social care.* 1st ed. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books.

**Magazines:**

Therapy Today (BACP)

Counselling & Therapy Research (BACP)

Person-Centered and Experiential Psychotherapies is currently published by Routledge (Taylor & Francis).

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