

Consultation on the development of National Occupational Standards for Psychological Therapies

1 December 2006 to 23 February 2007

Consultation Helpdesk

Phone 0845 121 4741 or email
sfhhelpdesk@dial.pipex.com

Psychological Therapies Consultation

A major new project is about to start

Are you interested in it?

Can you help?

The project

Skills for Health is planning to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the practice of Psychological Therapies in 2007. This is a development that will complement standards in other areas of healthcare in the public, private and voluntary sectors such as Mental Health and existing ENTO standards around counselling.

In October SfH completed an exercise to determine the scope of work required and to begin to shape a development strategy. This is at a time when there is heightened interest in the benefits of psychological therapies and, at the same time, discussion of the merits of regulating the work of therapists and counsellors.

In all areas of healthcare SfH has a responsibility to define standards or competences that carry the support of a wide range of interest groups. Right at the start of the project, therefore, we are inviting professional organisations and healthcare providers to contribute their views and suggestions about the scope of the NOS development and the way it should be handled.

As you may know, the Department of Health are leading on a separate project around the statutory regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists. This will require the same kind of analysis of the functions of psychological therapy as you will find in this consultation document. It follows that competences you identify for further development may usefully inform later discussion about the threshold standards that could be used for the regulation of specific roles. Any such moves towards regulation will be the subject of further, separate consultation by the Health Departments.

Would you like to help?

We would value any contribution you can make to the planning of this development work. In this document we suggest a number of important questions in these areas:

- How we should express psychological therapists' and counsellors' work with patients or clients. Whether a model developed recently in the scoping project (and shown in this document) could be used to develop the National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- What you consider to be the aspirational aspects of practice that most need description. We would like to support the efforts of professional bodies and healthcare providers to raise standards by reflecting their aspirations in the NOS
- How you would like to contribute to the standards development process next year

Timing

The consultation runs from 1 December 2006 until 23 February 2007. A report on the findings will be available from 12 March.

Subsequently, detailed development work on National Occupational Standards for Psychological Therapies is due to start in April 2007, with NOS ready for accreditation by December the same year.

See more about standards and the consultation on the next page

Psychological Therapies Consultation

How to respond to the consultation

We would like to find out the collective views of different interest groups. You may, therefore, need to consult a range of individuals or groups that are part of your organisation and produce a joint response. We are happy as well to receive individual responses. Either way, we would like to receive all responses to the consultation by 23 February.

We would prefer responses in electronic format, but paper copies will be fine if that is easier.

Appendix 2 is a handy response document that draws together the questions that we have highlighted. We are, nevertheless, happy to receive your response in any form you choose.

Queries? Call the Helpdesk

Skills for Health has set up a Helpdesk where you can raise queries and make sure that you are providing information in a way that will influence the development of the NOS project.

The Helpdesk will be open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday from 1 to 21 December 2006 and 3 to 31 January 2007. Phone 0845 121 4741 or email sfhhelpdesk@dial.pipex.com

We will try to respond to enquiries within one working day.

Your eventual response to the consultation should be sent as follows:

By email: consultation@skillsforhealth.org.uk

Or by mail: FAO Musrat Amin, Skills for Health,
2 Brewery Wharf, Kendell Street, Leeds LS10 1JR

About National Occupational Standards

National Occupational Standards (NOS) are applicable in all four countries of the UK. They are designed to build in workforce flexibility and responsiveness with a vision of improving patient care. In developing NOS, SfH solicit extensive expert engagement to ensure that the products are quality assured and fit for purpose.

NOS are used in:

- Developing appraisal
- Drawing up job descriptions
- Exit interviews
- Professional supervision
- Commissioning education and training
- Coaching and mentoring
- Evaluating practice
- Continuing Professional Development
- Informing team skills mix and gap analysis
- Developing Career & Qualification Frameworks

About Skills for Health

SfH is the UK-wide Sector Skills Council for health. It works across all four countries involving voluntary, independent and NHS health service providers. It identifies the sector's needs, helps develop more responsive provision, engages employers in skills development and influences skills policy.

You can read more about Skills for Health's work at <http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/>. There you also see NOS for a wide range of other healthcare occupations

Psychological Therapies Consultation

National Occupational Standards for Psychological Therapies and Counselling

An opportunity to take part in a development process

Skills for Health seeks your help in developing National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the practice of Psychological Therapies. We are inviting you to help us define the scope and strategy for the detailed development work on NOS to be carried out in 2007.

Some things are already clear from the general scoping work that has been carried out. For example, we are not going to pretend all psychological therapies are the same. Where therapies differ there will be different standards. Some aspects of standards, however, would be common to any therapies that are conducted in a similar way. Counselling is to be included. Beyond this, however, we need your advice, although we have some suggestions.

We particularly hope you can help with:

1. A model that sets out the features of a psychological therapist's or counsellor's work with patients or clients (see Part 1)
2. The strategy for defining the detailed content of standards (Part 2)

This document explains what we have done so far and asks questions to guide your review of what we are attempting.

Psychological Therapies Consultation

PART 1

A possible model

We would like your views on a model we have begun to develop. It is designed to show the different facets of therapists' work with patients/clients.

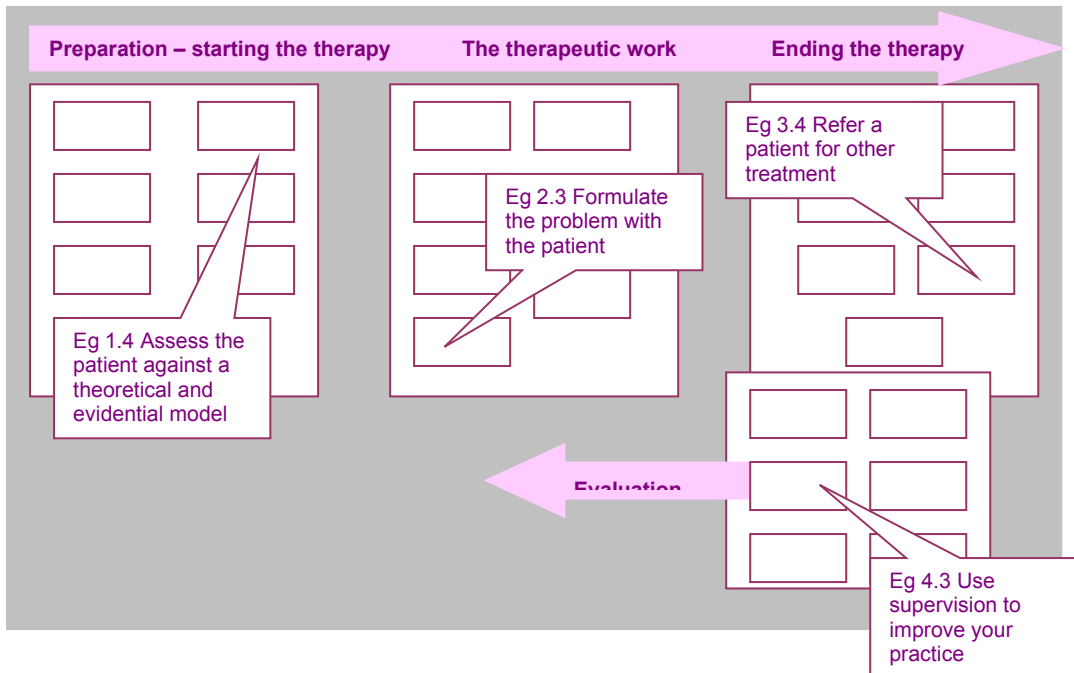
Stage 1

The model started as broad headings under which to identify therapists' work



Stage 2

The model below, shown in detail in Appendix 1, followed.



Psychological Therapies Consultation

Development of standards would go on to identify the detail, which, for some therapies, might look a bit like the example below. A combination, typical to NOS, of performance criteria and knowledge applied to a facet of some therapists' work with patients. You can see more NOS on the SfH website <http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/>

Psychological Therapies NOS

PT1.8 Agree goals with the patient against the changes they're looking for

Performance criteria

You need to

1. Enable the patient to express what they hope the therapy will achieve for them
2. Interpret the type and level of expectations and aspirations that lie behind what the patient says
3. Help the patient formulate goals that are consistent with what the therapy can achieve
4. Identify when the patient's expectations or aspirations are unrealistic and help them question them
5. Enthuse the patient in the therapy programme and help them understand how it will

Psychological Therapies NOS

PT1.8 Agree goals with the patient against the changes they're looking for

Knowledge and understanding

You need to apply

Linking goals and therapy

- K1. in-depth understanding processes that enhance therapeutic goals
- K2. in-depth understanding of methods of reinforcing behavioural goals
- K3. in-depth understanding of methods of staging goals
- K4. critical understanding of methods of managing a client's unrealistic expectations

Psychological Therapies Consultation

Questions

We would very much like your help in the further development of the standards. The first step is to help us judge if the model we have begun to set out covers the ground it needs to.

How should we define therapists' and counsellors' work?

For any occupation National Occupational Standards separate the work into facets or components and specify effective performance and knowledge for each one. The model in Appendix 1 suggests how such a separation might look for therapists' and counsellors' work with patients or clients. There are several cautions:

1. This is a first attempt, which is why we are particularly interested in your perspective
2. The central area of the psychotherapeutic work has not yet been expressed. This is where important distinctions need to be made between therapies and even the same therapy applied to different patient problems. We see this as a major component of next year's development project
3. The challenge, as for all occupational standards, is to separate the work into manageable parts but without creating a purely mechanistic model

Q1. Do you see the things therapists and counsellors do in this model? Specifically, which do you do?

Q2. What needs to be added?

Q3. Which ones are not relevant to you?

Q4. What changes in the model or developments of it would you suggest?

Q5. Is any part of the model specific to work with a particular client group?

In the response document, Appendix 2, we invite you to set out your responses against the main sections of the model

Can we ensure the standards are ready for tomorrow?

National Occupational Standards are meant to reflect emerging standards of good practice, not historical ones. It is therefore important to identify what is it that therapists and counsellors are meant to be doing in the future and the standard to which they should be doing them. You are probably already working to raise standards in a variety of ways. We need to ensure that your aspirations for practice are reflected in the NOS.

Q6. What are the aspects of practice and professionalism that you see the greatest need to improve or promote? Are they already in the model or do we need to add something?

Q7. What do they derive from – increased demand for therapy and counselling services or a need for higher quality in service provision?

Psychological Therapies Consultation

Part 2

The development process

This is the strategy we propose for developing the details of standards, starting in April 2007 and finishing in December the same year.

The strategy reflects a degree of uncertainty and pluralism in the field of psychological therapies. The evidence for the effectiveness and applicability of therapies varies widely in type, quality and quantity. It is not always clear what distinguishes effective practice from ineffective.

Initially, therefore, we would conduct detailed analysis work for a limited range of psychological therapies. Choosing a few contrasting therapies would allow the project to test how far it was possible to generalise across therapies and mental health problems. The project would then move on to address a wider range of therapies.

Specifically:

For each of four therapies test how far it is possible to generalise across problems/disorders and variants of therapy or whether standards need to be problem/disorder specific

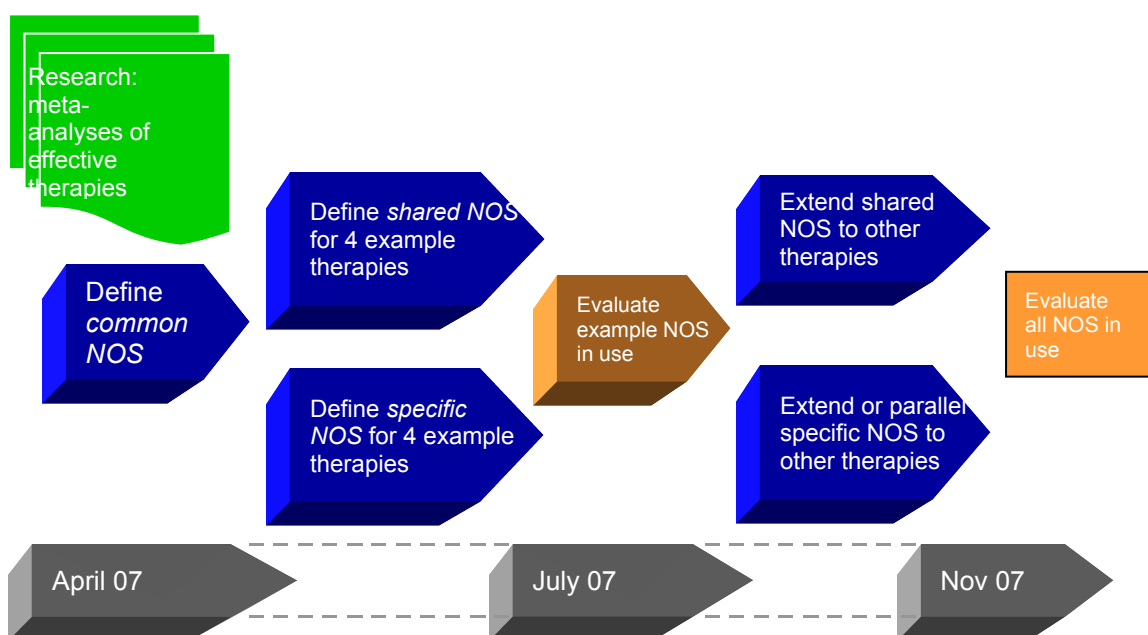
Identify where there could be standards common to two or more therapies

Test if the standards (general and specific) derived for these four areas are applicable to other therapies, whether they extend to work with children and adolescents

At each stage, take the advice of researchers, use a range of (job) analysis techniques and test draft standards with practitioners.

The process is illustrated below, with a suggested timescale.

Summary of proposed approach



Psychological Therapies Consultation

We propose to begin the work with four therapies, applicable to adults and children, which contrast with each other and are supported by one or more of the following criteria:

- supported by evidence of their effectiveness in treating specific problems
- supported in public policy and/or consumer choice
- widely used in the UK
- the subject of objective training standards

The therapies are:

- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Psychodynamic Psychotherapy
- Systemic Family Therapy
- Humanistic Psychotherapy and counselling
- The development process proposed is similar to the ones that have proved successful in other areas of healthcare, undertaken by SfH in the past. There are some differences, however.

The role of research is more significant, identifying what are the indicators of effective practice in therapies complementing the processes of job analysis. For example, the project would build on Tony Roth's and Steve Pilling's work at UCL on CBT competences (part of the IAPT project)

There is no presumption that all therapies can be treated in the same way

Psychological Therapies Consultation

Question

We are keen, therefore, to encourage as many contributions to the development process as possible, and to make sure that a wide range of evidence is used.

Q8. How would you like to contribute to the development process? You could, for example, give us access to practitioners, form a working group, conduct some research, offer to pilot some of the draft standards

How is it usually done?

In recent years different occupational interest groups have opted for different styles of involvement, principally as follows:

Providing members for working groups that meet throughout the project and are the main sources of information for analysis of the occupation

Providing access to workplaces - development and field testing sites where SfH's technical consultants can work with teams of practitioners

Contributing their own analysis. This is a useful complement to working groups or field sites. It lacks, however, the dynamic interaction of the previous modes of working

All projects now include what is referred to as a National Reference Group, drawn from the widest possible range of interest groups. The Group ensures that the developing standards properly represent realistic good practice. Members can champion sets of standards, and eventually provide authority for final versions to be signed off.

Psychological Therapies Consultation

Appendix 1 The functions for which NOS may be identified or drafted

The proposed functions against which NOS should be defined are listed below and presented in pathway form afterwards. This comes with a big health warning. This model is largely untested. It is offered as a stimulus to discussion and questions. We expect, however, that the eventual model will look something like this.

Note 1: where the term patient is used, the functions also apply to a family or group or someone referred to as a client.

Note 2: Many of these functions apply, in a common form, to all types of psychological therapy. They may, indeed, be similar to other healthcare functions for which NOS have already been developed.

Note 3: Some functions will apply to some therapies but not all.

Note 4: Some functions will require different versions for different combinations of therapy, problem/disorder and setting. We recommend that the extent of this variation be tested on CBT, psychodynamic psychotherapy and systemic family therapy.

Note 5: In the core of the therapeutic work, where the patient and therapist are engaged together in therapeutic activity, the distance between the modes of therapy is such that there may be no common expression for the functions taking place. There are likely to be several functions unique to each therapy in this area, with further functions unique to particular problems/disorders and perhaps even to the intensity of therapy.

Note 6: There are developed NOS not shown here that will cover other areas of a therapist's work, such as their CPD, management of their practice, respecting confidentiality, dignity and respect, knowing legal duties, relating to other professionals. (For example in NOS for counsellors and for psychologists.)

Psychological Therapies Consultation

1 Preparation – starting the therapy

- 1.1 Evaluate the evidence for therapies and techniques that may suit the patient and their problem/disorder in conjunction with other treatments
- 1.2 Help a patient make a valid choice among available therapies given the evidence available and other treatments they are receiving
- 1.3 Identify with the patient what they can do while they're waiting for the therapy to start
- 1.4 Assess the patient against a theoretical and evidential model
- 1.5 Plan a programme or strategy of treatment with the patient
- 1.6 Help the patient understand the treatment and its rationale
- 1.7 Agree a contract with the patient
- 1.8 Negotiate with the patient an initial scope for working together
- 1.9 Agree goals with the patient against the changes they're looking for *including help them engender hope and realistic expectations*
- 1.10 Assess risks and benefits of the prospective therapy

2 The therapeutic work and the working alliance

- 2.1 Create and maintain a relationship and environment that allows the patient to collaborate in the therapy

Here there will be a set of functions that define the quality of the therapeutic process, and are differentiated between therapies and problems/disorders. They will focus on the kinds of change in the patient that each therapy tries to achieve, but will also recognise the strict therapeutic procedures that some theoretical models and research evidence require.

- 2.2 Measure the scope and severity of the problem and how it is changing
- 2.3 Formulate the problem with the patient
- 2.4 Manage problems and maintain your therapeutic framework
- 2.5 Adapt your approach to respond to patient needs
- 2.6 Use new approaches in the absence of problem specific guidance or evidence
- 2.7 Evaluate the impact of a therapy session on the patient and therapist
- 2.8 Identify changes in the patient's feelings, cognitions, attitudes and behaviour
- 2.9 Identify changes in the patient's capacity to engage in or move beyond therapy (*eg resistance, barriers to change*)
- 2.10 Evaluate a patient's progress towards recovery or resolution of their problem
- 2.11 Re-evaluate your assessment of the patient (*reformulate*)
- 2.12 Identify techniques to deal with specific problems preventing change
- 2.13 Help the patient transfer session based work to real life situations
- 2.14 Identify through supervision how your response to a patient or your practice with them might change
- 2.15 Assess the risks and benefits of continuing the therapy

Psychological Therapies Consultation

3 Ending the therapy

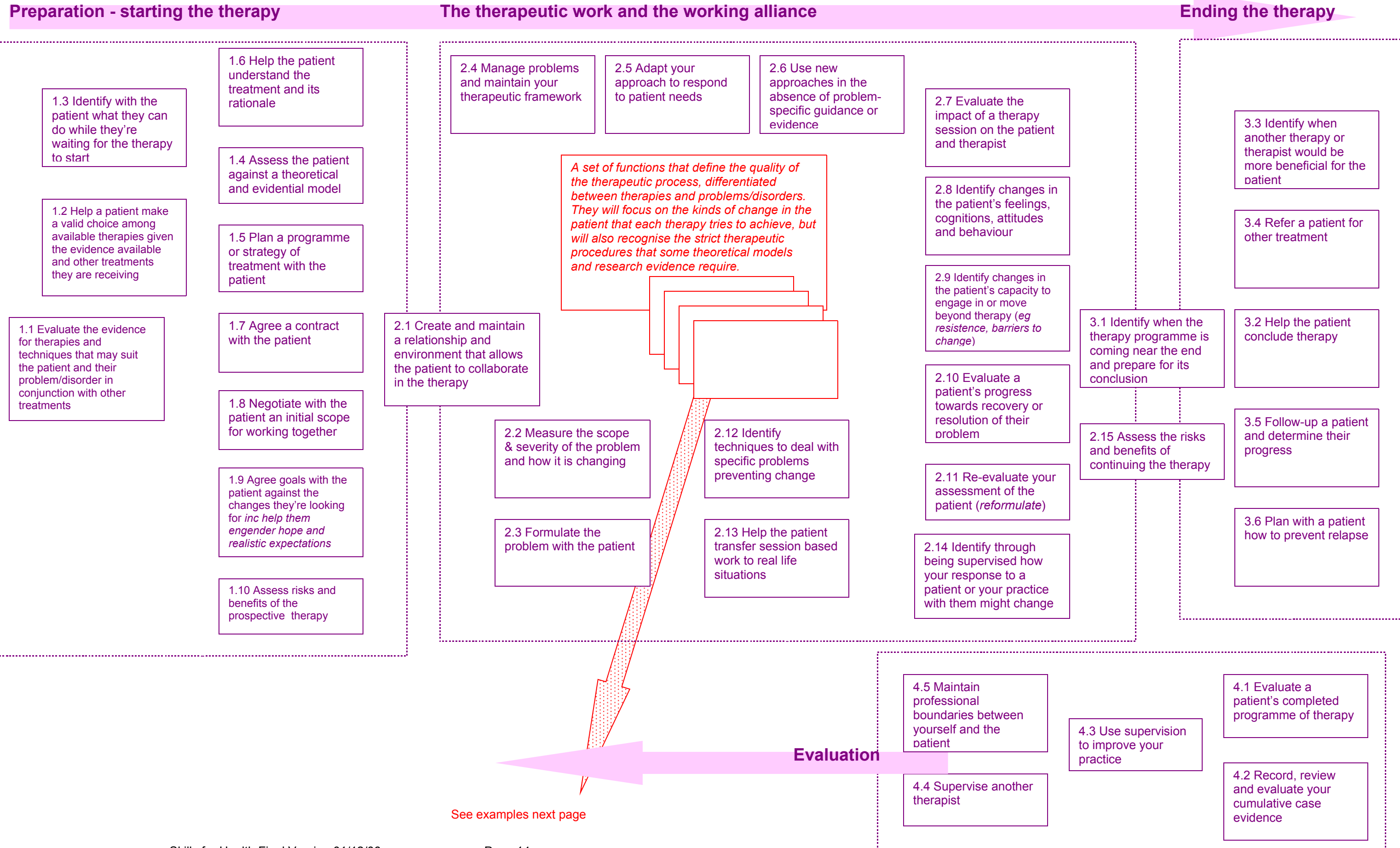
- 3.1 Identify when the therapy programme is coming near the end and prepare for its conclusion
- 3.2 Help the patient conclude therapy
- 3.3 Identify when another therapy or therapist would be more beneficial for the patient
- 3.4 Refer a patient for other treatment
- 3.5 Follow-up a patient and determine their progress
- 3.6 Plan with a patient how to prevent relapse

4 Evaluation

- 4.1 Evaluate a patient's completed programme of therapy
- 4.2 Record, review and evaluate your cumulative case evidence
- 4.3 Use supervision to improve your practice
- 4.4 Supervise another therapist
- 4.5 Maintain professional boundaries between yourself and the patient

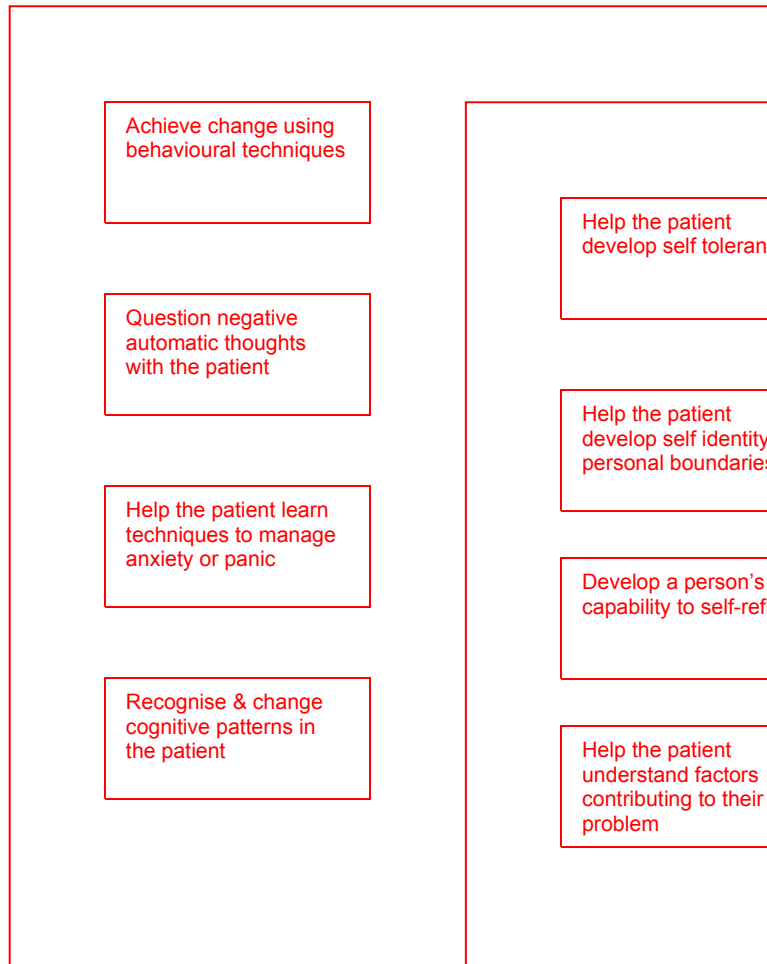
A Psychological Therapy pathway

To print the map in A4, choose 'Scale to paper size A4' in your print menu

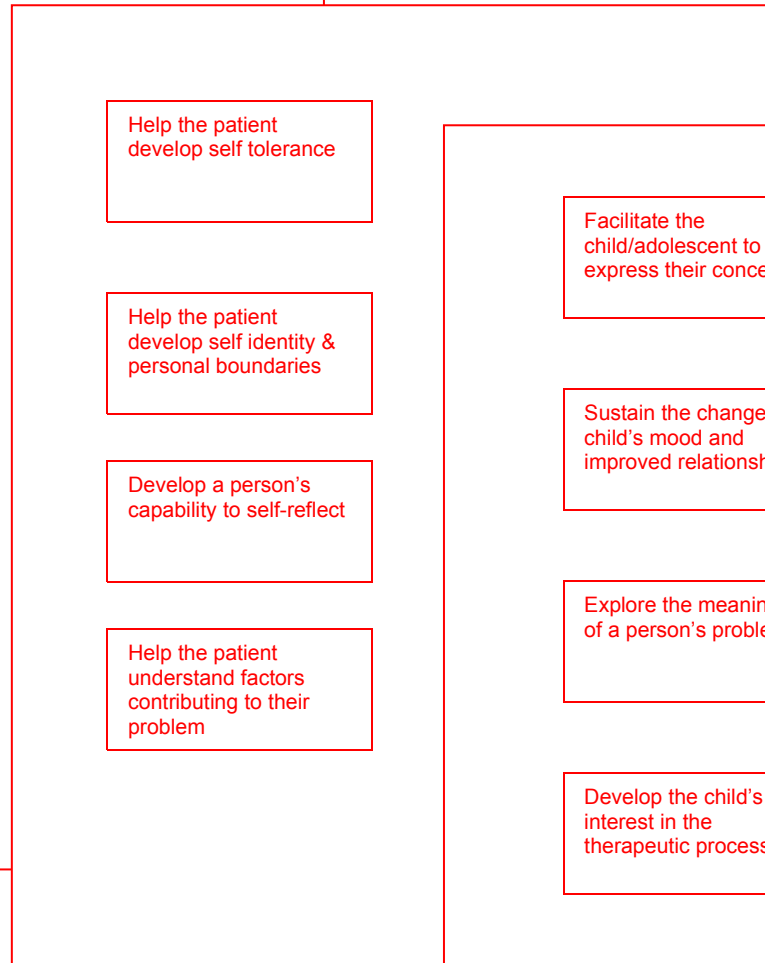


Psychological Therapies Consultation

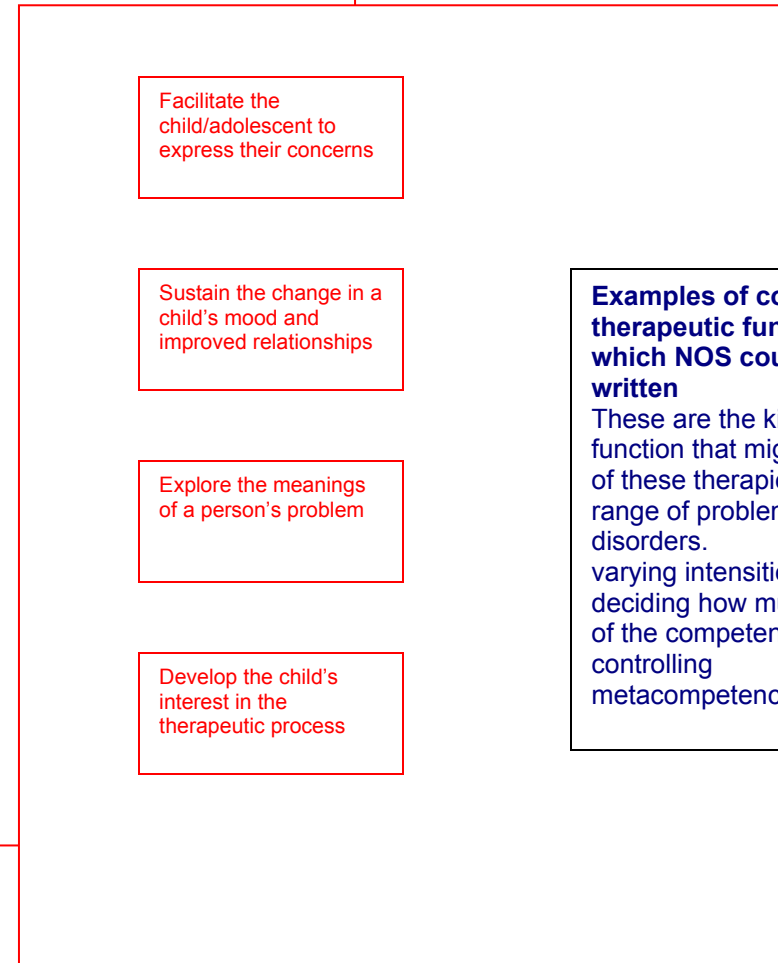
CBT



PdPT



SFT



Examples of core therapeutic functions for which NOS could be written

These are the kinds of function that might be part of these therapies for a range of problems or disorders, varying intensities, but deciding how much is part of the competence or a controlling metacompetence

Psychological Therapies Consultation

Appendix 2 - Response document

Please return your response:

By email: consultation@skillsforhealth.org.uk

Or by mail: FAO Musrat Amin, Skills for Health,
2 Brewery Wharf, Kendell Street, Leeds LS10 1JR

If in doubt, call the Helpdesk

The Helpdesk will be open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, from 1 to 21 December 2006 and 3 to 31 January 2007. Phone 0845 121 4741 or email sfhhelpdesk@dial.pipex.com. We will try to respond to enquiries within one working day.

Please tell us something about how your response was arrived at

**Q1. Do you see the things therapists and counsellors do in this model?
Specifically, which do you do?**

Preparation –
starting the therapy

The therapeutic
work and the
working alliance

Ending the therapy

Evaluation

Q2. What needs to be added?

Preparation –
starting the therapy

The therapeutic
work and the
working alliance

Ending the therapy

Evaluation

Psychological Therapies Consultation

Q3. Which ones are not relevant to you? Please give the numbers

**Preparation –
starting the therapy**

**The therapeutic
work and the
working alliance**

Ending the therapy

Evaluation

Q4. What changes in the model or developments of it would you suggest?

**Preparation –
starting the therapy**

**The therapeutic
work and the
working alliance**

Ending the therapy

Evaluation

Q5. Is any part of the model specific to work with a particular client group?

**Preparation –
starting the therapy**

**The therapeutic
work and the
working alliance**

Ending the therapy

Evaluation

Psychological Therapies Consultation

Q6. What are the aspects of practice and professionalism that you see the greatest need to improve or promote? Are they already in the model or do we need to add something?

Preparation –
starting the therapy

The therapeutic
work and the
working alliance

Ending the therapy

Evaluation

Q7. What do they derive from – increased demand for therapy and counselling services or a need for higher quality in service provision?

Q8. How would you like to contribute to the development process? You could, for example, give us access to practitioners, form a working group, conduct some research, offer to pilot some of the draft standards