

Integrating theory and professional practice:
addressing the gaps in child and young person
counsellor identity and training

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PhD 2023

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work

Department of Psychology
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Manchester Metropolitan University

2023

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child and young person counsellor identity and training**

Rebecca Kirkbride – PhD by Published work Route 1 –2023

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all the University of Roehampton MA ICC students. May this work serve you in your future careers helping children and young people and inspire you to go further than you ever thought you could.

Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been produced without the encouragement and guidance of my supervisory team at MMU, Dr Maria Livanou (Principal Supervisor), Dr Verity Longley, and Dr Susan Waring. They have been the most wonderful support during this process and their commitment to my PhD has been so welcome, particularly in times of struggle! I could not have had better companions on this journey. Thanks also to Professor Sue Kegerreis for her foundational work on the CYP counselling specialism, and to Dr Maggie Robson for her CYP-related support and guidance over the years. Thanks always to my clinical supervisor, Dr Aaron Balick.

I'm also grateful to all my family, friends and colleagues for their support and for putting up with me over the last few years. My parents, Enid and Richard, have always supported me, especially with writing and I am thankful for their encouragement. Thanks to my daughter Poppy for her love and wisdom; she and her partner Toby and our grand-bunnies Calypso and Phoebus are a constant source of sustaining humour and joy. Thanks also to my brother and family, Alex, Rachel, Olly and Harry for all their support.

I'm hugely grateful to BACP CYP lead, the wonderful Jo Holmes, for all her help and for being such a great ambassador for CYP counselling. Thanks too to the study participants for their important contribution. Thanks to all my Roehampton friends and colleagues, especially; Elise Cuschieri, ShediYah HatNebMao, Professor Mick Cooper, Tessa Watson, Sigal Shalev, Megan Stafford, Dr Hannah Gilbert, Julie McCann, and to the MA ICC students who taught me so much about the joys of qualitative research, especially; Martina Osborne, Christina Zinetti, Lucy Peele, Lorraine Mirham. Special thanks to my erstwhile UoR colleague, dear friend, and PhD comrade-in-arms Nancy Fowler – without her humour and empathy I am not sure I would have got to this point! Thanks also to those at BACP and Sage who have supported this project and the submitted work; my editor at Sage, Susannah Trefgarne, and Caroline Jesper and Eve Orton at BACP.

Final and biggest love and thanks go to my partner, Richard. He declared 'there's a PhD in that', way back when and he's probably been rueing those words ever since.

Abstract

Over the last two decades there has been increased interest in the use of counselling to improve the emotional and psychological welfare of children and young people (CYP) in the UK. However, historically the field of counselling for CYP has lacked specific professional standards for training and practice. Consequently, counselling for CYP has been provided by counsellors from a range of training backgrounds, including those who have completed training solely in the knowledge and skills required for therapeutic work with adult clients. For counselling for CYP clients to have efficacy and a solid ethical basis it needs to be delivered by practitioners with core knowledge and skills in key areas differing from those required for adult counselling, such as child and adolescent development, CYP-specific legal and safeguarding issues, family and parenting dynamics and the use of play- and/or creative-therapy methods attuned to the developmental stage of the client. This core knowledge provides a foundation for the skills used in counselling CYP clients and establishes the basis for a professional identity of counsellors working with CYP clients. This thesis proposes that a recognised professional identity, based on established professional standards and training curricula covering core knowledge and skills, is necessary for the effective and ethical provision of counselling for CYP. The published work submitted as part of this thesis is argued to have made a scholarly contribution to establishing this identity by addressing gaps in current understanding and provision. The following analytic commentary provides a critical evaluation of the scholarly contribution of the submitted works to establishing the core knowledge and standards which will form the basis for a professional identity for counsellors of CYP clients. The commentary concludes with critical reflections on ideological and methodological issues as well as implications for future research and policy in the field.

Chapter 1: Introductory Section.

This introductory section provides context for the publications presented in this thesis. It begins with an overview of the current state of the field of counselling for children and young people (CYP) and a history of counselling for CYP as a psychological intervention for treating emotional, psychological, and behavioural difficulties. It explores the significance of professional identity based on a specialised knowledge and skills framework for counsellors working with CYP clients, arguing that professional identity is crucial for the effective provision of counselling to those young people most likely to benefit. This exploration provides context for subsequent sections of the thesis, including the development of the published works.

1.1 Counselling for children and young people: The current state of the field.

Before examining the field of counselling for CYP it will be useful to provide working definitions for 'child', 'young person' and 'adolescent' in the context of this thesis. In the UK, children legally become adults at 18-years of age. However, a Lancet "Viewpoint" consensus statement, (Sawyer et al., 2018) exploring both biological (including neurological) development and social role transitions from a 21st century perspective, places the conclusion of the human neurological growth period around 25-years-of-age, thus offering a contemporary definition for the developmental period of adolescence and providing a basis for extending the age range of this period beyond that of chronological legal adulthood at 18 years of age. This supports the notion that, while chronological age has legal significance in the context of the provision of statutory services such as education and health services, the developmental stage a young person has reached is equally, if not more, relevant when

delivering counselling services to CYP clients (BACP, 2019a). Neuro-biological and cognitive development are significant in the delivery of counselling interventions, as the concept of 'self', including the capacity for self-awareness, understanding of significant aspects of human experience such as death, loss, and levels of agency and autonomy, change significantly over the life-course and particularly during the sensitive period of human development from birth to early-adulthood (Kirkbride, 2018a; Music, 2017). For the purposes of this thesis, 'child' denotes a person of up to 12-years of age and an adolescent or 'young person' is a person aged 12-25 years.

1.1.2 Children and young people's mental health and the need for counselling.

According to UK government statistics, the number of CYP in the UK identified as in need of services to support their mental health and wellbeing has risen continuously throughout the last decade (Local Government Association, 2020; NHS England, 2021; Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2023). Half of mental health conditions begin before the age of 14, with 75 percent starting before the age of 24. According to recent National Health Service (NHS) analysis of mental health during the pandemic and 2020/21 lockdowns, the numbers of children aged 6-16 years with 'a probable mental disorder' have increased from 1 in 9 (11.6%) in 2017 to 1 in 6 (17.4%) in 2021 (NHS digital, 2021). Whilst there has been renewed interest from the government in supporting child and adolescent mental health, waiting lists for statutory mental health services are lengthy with strict criteria in operation. According to data released by the Children's Commissioner in March 2023, the latest figures show 734,000 CYP were referred to Child and Young Peoples' Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) in 2021-22, with approximately a third (238,000) referred but not receiving treatment. These figures represent a 47% increase on the previous year (Office of the

Children's Commissioner, 2023). With the additional implications of the COVID pandemic and the rise of CYP use of social media on the development and exacerbation of mental health issues among CYP (UK Parliament, 2021), there is renewed interest in the effectiveness of psychological interventions, including counselling, for CYP (Pilling et al., 2020). We have been living in a digital age now for over two-decades. Those born post-1980, described as 'Digital Natives' (Prensky, 2001) are now in their 30's and 40's, and every subsequent generation of CYP have experienced more of their lives in the dual locations of 'real life' and 'cyberspace' or on social media (Kirkbride, 2021). A report from 'Internet Matters' identified several areas where CYP are at risk from their engagement with social media and online activities. These include; sleep deprivation, emotional distress, low self-esteem, mental health issues, as well as serious safeguarding issues that may be hidden from those responsible for their care and welfare (Katz and El Asam, 2019). There is broad acceptance that mental health issues originating during childhood, if untreated, continue into adulthood with potential for longstanding personal, social, and economic consequences (Chen et al., 2006; Cooper et al., 2021). It is therefore important to identify and provide interventions that are effective and accessible for the widest possible CYP population.

1.1.3 Current provision of counselling for CYP.

Counselling for CYP is often provided in schools and educational settings (Cooper et al., 2021). While not part of statutory educational provision in England, school-based counselling is provided within approximately 60% of English secondary schools (Cooper, 2013). School-counselling is currently delivered via a range of contractual arrangements (Cooper, 2013). These include services provided by a range of charitable or third-sector organisations such as 'Place2Be' (Place2Be.com) and Schools Counselling Partnership

(schoolsounsellingpartnership.co.uk), who provide counselling services to schools across the UK. Alternatively, counselling services are arranged and funded directly by the school itself, with counselling delivered by independently contracted counsellors, or by staff already working in school who have been trained as counsellors in addition to other roles (Harris, 2009; Jenkins and Polat, 2006).

In addition to counselling services provided in school, counselling for CYP is offered in other contexts by a range of providers. These include CYP-focused community organisations who provide 'Youth Information, Advice and Counselling Services' (YIACS) in alliance with the UK umbrella body, 'Youth Access' (youthaccess.org.uk). Counselling is also provided within some CAMHS services, both within the NHS and by private health providers. Counselling services for CYP are also offered by counsellors working in private practice and private clinic settings.

1.1.4 The role of school-based counselling.

CYP counselling provision, such as school-based counselling, offers an accessible and non-stigmatising intervention for a wide population of CYP, as highlighted in the recent 'ETHOS' randomised-control trial (Cooper et al., 2021). This trial found that unlike other psychological interventions, such as Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT), school-based counselling is not specific to diagnosis and, crucially, provides treatment for CYP presenting to services who do not meet diagnostic thresholds required for CAMHS interventions (Cooper et al., 2021). Counselling for CYP is indicated as an effective treatment of complex emotional issues and trauma-related problems (Snell et al., 2013).

Cooper et al. (2021) suggest a 'large practitioner base exists' for the delivery of school-based counselling, indicating that counsellors with the skills and experience to meet the needs of these young people are available. However, until standardised competences were developed by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and University College London (UCL) in 2013, (Hill et al., 2013) along with a national training curriculum (<https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/16763/bacp-children-and-young-people-training-curriculum-jun20.pdf>) there were no established professional or training requirements for delivering counselling to CYP, and no nationally recognised title or identity for counsellors working with CYP clients.

1.1.5 BACP competence framework for counselling young people aged 11-18 years.

The BACP (2014) and (2019a) CYP competence frameworks, 'Practitioner Manual' (Kirkbride, 2018a), and CYP training curricula (BACP, 2019b/2020), represent significant developments for professional standards in the field. Professional standards perform a vital function in the provision of health care (Speller et al., 2009). A professional standards framework offers the public and other stakeholders a clear statement of the knowledge, skills and ethics of the profession. Professional frameworks determine the threshold for the expected competence of a practitioner in the field, allowing development beyond this threshold to take place as the practitioner gains experience and develops further expertise and/or specialisms.

The BACP (2014) competence framework for therapeutic work with young people aged 11-18 years represented the first published professional standards for counselling with this client group. This, along with the subsequent 2019 framework which extended the scope of the competences to encompass work with children from 4-11 years of age (BACP, 2019a),

identified the areas of core knowledge and skills required for, and unique to, the practice of counselling CYP. The frameworks provide a solid evidence-based foundation for the professional identity of CYP counsellor. Developments such as the competence frameworks and the Practitioner Manual (Kirkbride, 2018a), commissioned by BACP to present the competences in an accessible form for training and development purposes, provide structure and clarity in the field of education and training for counsellors, and can be viewed as contributing to the evolution of counselling for CYP clients as a distinct profession (Okech and Rubel, 2019).

The empirical study undertaken as part of the present thesis submission (Kirkbride et al., 2023) examines the impact of these resources on counsellors currently working with this group. The study, BACP (2014/19) competence frameworks, and accompanying 'Practitioner Manual' (Kirkbride, 2018a) will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

[1.2 Counselling and psychotherapy: professional regulation.](#)

This section examines the historical context of counselling for CYP as a basis for the thesis, along with an outline of factors which could impede the development of a professional identity based on the core knowledge and skills represented in the competence frameworks.

1.2.1 Professional regulation of counselling and psychotherapy.

As stated by professional bodies such as BACP and United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), the practice of counselling and psychotherapy requires prior training in psychotherapeutic theory, and therapeutic skills supported by evidence from empirical research, as well as adherence to recognised ethical standards

[\(https://www.bacp.co.uk/careers/careers-in-counselling/training/](https://www.bacp.co.uk/careers/careers-in-counselling/training/) ;

<https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/media/my0hws01/ukcp-adult-psychotherapeutic-counselling-standards-of-education-and-training-2019.pdf>), (retrieved 06.06.23).

Counsellors in the UK generally practice under the auspices of an established professional body (BACP; UKCP), with responsibility for maintaining and upholding these standards, although this is not currently a legal requirement. UK counselling and psychotherapy professional bodies hold voluntary Professional Standards Authority (PSA) registers of practitioners who meet these minimum standards in addition to other professional requirements, such as receiving regular clinical supervision and holding professional indemnity insurance. While attempts have been made over the last five decades to establish government regulation of the provision of counselling and psychotherapy in the UK, these have so far been unsuccessful. The reasons for this include a failure to establish unified credentials for counsellors and psychotherapists (Holmes and Lindley, 1998), or to differentiate their services from those provided by other 'helping professions' such as counselling psychologists, regulated by the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) since 2009 (Jenkins, 2017). The HCPC is an example of a government-sponsored regulatory body tasked with developing stringent criteria for establishing whether an occupation can be viewed legally as a profession and members given a legally protected title, for example 'Counselling Psychologist' or 'Art Psychotherapist'. Both titles are protected and can only be used by those who have met and continue to meet the required HCPC standards. This has important implications for practitioners and their professional identity, since a protected title means anyone using it without being properly registered with the regulating body can be prevented from doing so by law (Jenkins, 2017, p.8). Attempts have been made to regulate counselling since the early 1970's, largely due to public concerns regarding abuse

of power by practitioners (Holmes and Lindley, 1998; Jenkins, 2017), and these attempts continue in UK parliament, including in a recent UK Parliament House of Lords debate (ACP, 2020).

1.2.2 Regulation of counselling for CYP: Current situation.

There is currently no specific recognised or registered title of CYP counsellor, and the occupational field of counselling for CYP is not recognised by any statutory regulatory body. The BACP offers registration for suitably trained and supervised counsellors under their PSA membership register. This is a voluntary register that offers assurances to the public regarding health and social care practitioners not legally regulated by the government. When they have gained post-qualifying client hours, registered BACP members can complete an application to become 'accredited' members. The BACP requires registered members to have completed a counselling training course of specific duration to include a training placement of a minimum of 100 hours of supervised practice. BACP accredited counsellors are required to receive supervision for a minimum of 1.5 hours per month, to hold professional liability insurance, and keep their knowledge and skills up to date through continuing professional development (CPD) activities

(<https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/accredited-membership/>), (retrieved 06.06.23). All registered members of BACP are bound by the BACP (2018) Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions and the BACP Professional Conduct Procedure (<https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/membership-policies/bacp-register-terms-and-conditions/>), (retrieved 06.06.23).

BACP accredited members who can evidence appropriate CYP counselling training and experience are able to provide a portfolio demonstrating this in application for the title of,

‘Senior Accredited Counsellor/Psychotherapists working with children and young people’ (<https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/1523/bacp-senior-accreditation-children-young-people-guide.pdf>), (retrieved 06.06.23).

1.2.3 Counselling for CYP: Relevant historical background and subsequent developments.

In contrast to the history of counselling for CYP, child psychoanalytic psychotherapy as a recognised intervention and professional identity dates from the origins of psychoanalysis in the early 20th century, and the work of Sigmund Freud (Blake, 2008). Early psychoanalysts Melanie Klein and Anna Freud adapted Freud’s psychoanalytic theory and approach for use with younger patients (Blake 2008; Kirkbride, 2018a). Their work led to the establishment of training organisations for child psychotherapists, and to qualification as a child and adolescent psychoanalytic psychotherapist (Rous and Clark, 2009; Association of Child Psychotherapists (ACP), 2020). There are currently several training organisations under the umbrella of the ACP offering trainings in child psychotherapy

(<https://childpsychotherapy.org.uk/training-events-0/how-train-child-and-adolescent-psychotherapist>) (Retrieved 06.06.23). The ACP route to qualification is a five-year doctoral-level training which requires trainees to attend personal therapy or analysis several times a week while training. Trainees receive NHS bursaries and the training leads to employment within NHS CAMHS services. ACP psychoanalytic psychotherapists frequently work with complex cases requiring intensive therapeutic interventions, often involving the client’s family or carers alongside individual client work (Kegerreis, 2006).

While counselling for CYP has been offered in schools and other settings since the 1960’s in the UK, as previously noted, the main professional body for counselling and psychotherapy in the UK, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), had no specific

training or practice requirements for counsellors working with children and adolescents prior to 2014 (BACP, 2014). There is thus a significant incongruence to be seen between the rigorous training required by professional bodies such as the ACP, and the lack of training standards for counsellors working with CYP clients.

1.2.4 Counselling for CYP: Recent developments.

BACP has identified children, young people and families (CYPF) as an area of strategic priority for the organisation, stating an intention to:

1. Increase understanding of the effectiveness of counselling and psychotherapy for CYPF.
2. Persuade policy and decision makers of the relevance of counselling and psychotherapy for CYPF in schools, colleges and wider community settings, including options for online provision.
3. Increase paid workforce development opportunities for counsellors and psychotherapists working with CYPF within our core competences framework.
4. Capture the stories of CYPF to demonstrate how counselling has changed their lives.

(<https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/advancing-the-profession/influencing-decision-makers/children-young-people-and-families/> - retrieved 06.06.23).

Without established professional and training requirements for CYP counsellors, this work is often undertaken by counsellors trained to work with adult clients who may lack specialised skills and knowledge required to work appropriately and effectively with younger clients

(Harris, 2009; Kegerreis, 2006; Nel, 2017). Specialised skills and knowledge for counselling

CYP include:

- Skills in play therapy to engage young clients for whom 'talking therapy' is not appropriate due to developmental factors.
- An understanding of child and adolescent development, including knowledge of biological, neurological, environmental, cultural, and systemic influences on development.
- Ability to take developmental factors into account in forming and maintaining therapeutic relationships.
- A comprehensive and current understanding of the ethical and legal issues underpinning the practice of counselling with under-18's.
- Skills in multi-agency working and maintaining ethical boundaries while maintaining functional relationships with parents and other professionals around the client.

(BACP 2014/2019; Kirkbride, 2018a)

1.3: Professional identity for counsellors working with CYP.

In the following sections the concept of professional identity will be further examined along with an argument for why this is significant for the thesis.

1.3.1 Rationale for establishing a professional identity for counsellors working with CYP.

Defining a professional identity has a range of functions in any occupational field. These include but are not restricted to; establishing professional and ethical standards for professional practice; training standards for entry into the profession; clear understanding of professional role for service-users and other stakeholders (Jenkins, 2017; Woo et al.,

2014). Given the high levels of trust inferred on counsellors by individual clients and their families, as well as the wider public, an understanding of relevant professional standards is of public interest and importance. The vulnerability of CYP is enshrined in law (Children Act, 1989; 2004), and this arguably increases the importance of such standards for those working with this client group.

1.3.2 Perspectives on professions and professionalism.

Professions and professionalism as concepts have been much discussed within the field of Sociology (Freidson, 2001; Larson, 1977; Macdonald, 1995). Sociological perspectives on this include 'Functionalist' views such as those of Durkheim (1957) who viewed professions as representing a positive and stable force in society with the power to prevent its 'moral breakdown' by upholding important, long-established values (Macdonald, 1995). This is exemplified by the legal profession which applies established rules and principles to contemporary society. Freidson (1970) argues that the 'distinctive autonomy' of a profession depends on whether it receives state recognition and is of value to wider society. Counselling and psychotherapy are viewed as being of benefit to society, particularly as the empirical evidence-base grows to support this (Hill et al., 2008). However, counselling and psychotherapy as discreet professions are seen by some (Randall, 2017; Rizq and Jackson, 2019) to have been negatively affected by the rise of positivist 'evidence-based practice' and the 'privileged position' or standing of empirically tested interventions, such as CBT within the NHS (Randall, 2017). This rise has been partly due to an established empirical evidence-base and inclusion in National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines (Guy et al., 2012). In addition, the UK government-led initiative, 'Improving Access to Psychological Therapies' (IAPT)(Now, 'NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression'),

developed in 2007 in response to a report by New Labour economist Richard Layard, is seen by some counsellors and psychotherapists as posing a threat to the humanistic epistemological and philosophical foundations of counselling and psychotherapy due in part to its focus on manualised therapies (Rizq and Jackson, 2019).

1.3.3 Professionalism: Impediments and critiques within counselling and psychotherapy.

Given the issues raised in the previous section, I would argue that the provision of ethical and effective counselling, as well as the continued survival of the counselling professions, requires the establishment of a specific professional identity, based on a specialised knowledge-base with a clear practical application and value to society (Hanna and Bemak, 1997). There are significant impediments to this, including ideological divisions within the field regarding professionalism as a concept (House, 2010; Rogers, 1973). Freidson (2001) argues that establishing professional identity is often hampered due to division between practitioners within a given occupational field (Freidson, 2001, p.3). These divisions seem most apparent within counselling when the issue of professional regulation arises or when professional bodies seek to define and differentiate between identities, e.g., ‘counsellor’, ‘psychotherapist’, or ‘psychotherapeutic counsellor’, and to determine levels of training and experience required to hold specific titles within the profession. Difficulties frequently stem from fundamental differences in epistemology and philosophy underpinning the practice of professionals who all identify with the title of ‘counsellor’ or ‘psychotherapist’ and see their role as ‘supporting’ others who are ‘struggling’ in some way psychologically and/or emotionally, but who have very different understandings in terms of how they conceptualise and approach ‘support’ and ‘struggle’. For example, a person-centred counsellor would understand their role in terms of providing the core relationship

conditions of empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1951) in a way that the client can receive, thus facilitating optimal growth of their organism (Rogers, 1951). In contrast, a psychodynamic or psychoanalytic practitioner may approach the work by endeavouring to understand the unconscious mechanisms underlying the patient's difficulties, and then treating them through interpretation of transference (Lemma, 2003). This is an over-simplification to convey the fundamental philosophical differences underpinning the same professional identity of 'counsellor' or 'psychotherapist'. This has further significance in respect of how the concept of professionalism is viewed and critiqued by some clinicians and academics, particularly within the field of person-centred counselling (House, 2010; Rogers, 1973). The pioneer of person-centred counselling, Carl Rogers seemed latterly unconvinced of the benefits of qualifications for therapists, writing that, "...there are many with diplomas on their walls who are not fit to do therapy" (Rogers, 1973, p.364). Rogers was concerned about the influence of 'professional' therapists on the practice of client-centred therapy, fearing this would lead to an increase in a sense of 'expertise' and a consequent decline in their capacity for true helpfulness, as well as the exclusion from the field of uncertified relational 'helpers'. Person-centred counselling (client-centred therapy) (Rogers, 1951) emphasises the therapeutic value of the provision of relational conditions by one human to another. It is based on an epistemology that places the attitude and personal philosophy of the counsellor as central to their ability to offer the "necessary and sufficient" (Rogers, 1959) conditions to support therapeutic change. Rogers (1973) asks, "Dare we do away with professionalism?" (Rogers, 1973, p.363-7), suggesting that certification of therapists does little, if anything, to protect the public from ineffective or unhelpful practitioners. House uses this view as a basis for a contemporary argument against statutory regulation of counselling and psychotherapy, arguing that professionalism

and regulation exclude individuals from the field, rather than protecting the vulnerability of their clients from rogue practitioners (House, 2010, p.203). The principles of professionalism and regulation are viewed as at odds with the fundamentally humanistic ethos of person-centred therapy where two human beings meet with the intention that, "...there should come about in one or both parties, more appreciation of, more expression of, more functional use of the latent inner resources of the individual" (Rogers, 1959, p.6), rather than the practical application of a discreet and evidence-based knowledge base. Holmes and Lindley (1998) present a counter-argument to this, based on Seighart's (1979) proposal for an 'indicative' register for psychotherapy. This, it is argued, would restrict the title of psychotherapist to those who had completed specific training and adhere to professional and ethical standards for practice, whilst not outlawing the practice of 'psychotherapy techniques' by others, such as clergy, social workers etc. This approach offers a compromise by protecting the professional identity of those trained in providing therapeutic interventions for a range of clinical concerns, and those wishing to use relational techniques to support the wellbeing of their fellow human beings in whatever context they find themselves. This could be viewed as similar to the difference between a trained medic (such as doctor or surgeon) applying their skills to treat patients in a clinical context, and someone giving medicine to their child or offering a plaster to someone with a minor cut on their hand. It is interesting to note that in the 25 years since Holmes and Lindsay put forward this idea for managing difference in the training and skills of those in the counselling professions, there has been little movement towards regulation of the profession or discrete professional identities. However, in February 2023 a partnership of counselling and psychotherapy membership bodies adopted a 'Scope of Practice and Education' (SCoPEd) standardised competence framework for adult-focused therapy which delineates between

those with 'Column A, B, and C' training and competences (<https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/advancing-the-profession/scoped/scoped-framework/> - retrieved 06.06.23). This has not come without controversy, particularly from those whose theoretical epistemology views the competences as based in a medical model of distress that is at odds with the person-centred approach (<https://www.the-pca.org.uk/the-association/in-action.html> - retrieved 06.06.23). BACP are currently in the preparation phase of adopting the SCoPEd framework, looking to have fully integrated the competences in their mechanisms for registration, accreditation and training by 2026. Given how recently the framework was adopted, it remains to be seen what the implications of SCoPEd will be for regulation of the profession. The framework only relates to therapy with adult clients, but again, there are likely to be implications for professional standards for CYP counselling as the framework is integrated by organisations such as BACP.

1.3.4 Counselling for CYP: special consideration.

In contrast to the critical view of professionalism in counselling and psychotherapy outlined in the section above, strong arguments can be made for the importance of training competences and professional identity in the field of counselling for CYP. Kegerreis (2006; 2020) has argued the need for specific training for counsellors working with CYP clients beyond that required for work with adults. The BACP (2014/19a) competence framework and supporting resources such as the training curricula (<https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/16830/bacp-children-and-young-people-training-curriculum-2022.pdf> - retrieved 06.06.23) and 'Practitioner Manual' (Kirkbride, 2018a), explicitly state the specialist knowledge and skill-based competences required for effective therapeutic work with CYP clients. There are two main considerations here; the first is that

CYP under the age of 18 are viewed distinctly from adults within UK and international law, and the second is that a specific set of counselling skills are required for therapeutic work with CYP due to the development trajectory they follow as they move towards adulthood (see 1.2.4 above). Under UK and international law, children under the age of 18-years do not have the same rights and levels of autonomy as adults and are not held to the same legal standards and responsibilities as those over 18-years (Children Act, 1989). Childhood is perceived within Western society as a sensitive developmental phase wherein there are opportunities to support the development and wellbeing of CYP prior to reaching legal majority (Children Act, 1989 and 2004). Societal attitudes towards acknowledging and treating mental health issues in childhood and adolescence have developed significantly, particularly over the last two decades (Cooper et al., 2021). Counselling as a treatment for childhood psychological and emotional difficulties has begun to establish an evidence-base (Cooper et al., 2021; Hanley and Noble, 2017) leaving scope for counsellors to be identified as competent to work with a range of emotional, psychological, social and behavioural issues experience by CYP. Within the UK, counselling is now a statutory provision within secondary schools in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, although this is not yet the case in England.

1.3.5 Implications of lack of specific professional identity for counsellors working with CYP.

The lack of an established professional identity for counsellors working with CYP has wide implications for practitioners, clients, and other stakeholders such as funding bodies and educational providers. These implications will be examined in further detail in the discussion of the empirical study (Kirkbride et al., 2023) conducted as part of the present thesis. In brief, the study findings found misunderstandings and misperceptions of the role and

professional identity of counsellor by other professionals, particularly those in CAMHS or educational contexts. Harris, exploring the experiences of counsellors working in school settings, discusses the need for integration of counselling within allied services, and for a professional 'secure base' for counselling for CYP, concluding that work is required to enable counsellors to be viewed as professionals whose work can be integrated within wider school systems: "With a professional secure base there is more likelihood they can function collaboratively to sustain their satisfaction, agency, commitment, and effectiveness over the long term" (Harris, 2009, p.179-80). This view is echoed by Nel, in an article for BACP's 'Children, Young People and Families' divisional publication suggesting further training is needed to enable CYP counsellors to communicate effectively to other professionals what it is they do and how this is achieved (Nel, 2017, p.21).

Hasenfeld (1992) makes the case that all forms of human service must be perceived as legitimate by clients, regulators, and resource-providers. In counselling for CYP this includes the client themselves, as well as parents and carers, social services, headteachers and other stakeholders. Policy makers and commissioners (such as government agencies) require clarity regarding counselling for CYP, including understanding of the skills and competences of those delivering it, as well as the evidence base for its efficacy as an intervention. In this way, a coherent and nationally recognised professional identity ensures the provision of a high standard of counselling to those who would benefit most from counselling for CYP.

The present thesis proposes that counselling for CYP needs to be clearly defined as a profession, with training, ethical and professional standards, as well as an evidence-base for its effectiveness, in order to be held in parity of esteem along with other psychological

interventions. Harris (2009) found that counsellors working with CYP clients were often aware of their impact via anecdotal feedback from the client or others they were in contact with, e.g. teachers, pastoral care workers etc. (Harris, 2009). However, such anecdotal evidence is not available to the wider public, government and other stakeholders and funding bodies. Long standing issues regarding the perceived status of counselling for CYP, compared to other services such as IAPT, CAMHS, educational psychologists etc. places counselling in danger of losing its place as a valued intervention, arguably leaving young people at risk of not receiving accessible and beneficial therapeutic support during their formative years (Ludlow et al., 2020). This links to the first stated strategic aim of BACP to, ‘increase understanding of the effectiveness of counselling and psychotherapy for CYPF’ (BACP, 2022). This requires a clear understanding of what constitutes counselling and psychotherapy for CYP, as well as an understanding of what sets it apart from other interventions for CYP.

1.5 Biographical context and background for the thesis.

My therapeutic training began at Sussex University in 2000 as a psychodynamic psychotherapeutic counsellor. While my clinical training was focused on psychodynamic therapy with adult clients, I completed a second training-placement in a youth-advice centre where I worked with clients from 12-25 years of age. In 2003 I took up a post as a counsellor in a community setting with CYP, delivering counselling services funded through the UK government Sure-Start initiative. As the service came under the umbrella of Sure-Start services, I was part of a multi-disciplinary team and met regularly with various professionals including a CAMHS child and adolescent psychiatrist, a CAMHS family therapist, Sure-Start family support workers, and local youth workers. Families who had been identified as in

need of support were discussed by the team, and services allocated as appropriate. As a counsellor, I was not expected to break confidentiality regarding session content, but my view regarding referrals or potential support was respected along with that of other professionals. My work as a counsellor with CYP in other settings including primary and secondary education led me to appreciate the different set of competences required by therapeutic work with CYP and to seek further training in the specific knowledge and skills required for counselling CYP clients. My CYP counsellor colleagues at the time had completed adult rather than CYP counselling training, and I latterly became interested in developing training resources for other practitioners who were similarly seeking additional competence in CYP counselling skills and knowledge.

My entry into the counselling profession broadly coincided with the publication of 'Every Child Matters' (DfES, 2003), and the Children Act (2004). These provided a framework for a major overhaul of children's services in the UK, with an explicit commitment from the government to optimising wellbeing, life chances and potential for all CYP, particularly those identified as socially disadvantaged (Harris, 2006). This included an emphasis on the need for services to be offered in venues familiar and accessible to young people and their families, leading to a rapid expansion of counselling services in UK schools and community settings (Jenkins and Polat, 2006). Delineating the results of a survey of school counselling provision in England and Wales, Jenkins and Polat found alongside this "rapid flowering" of services, some challenges arose regarding this provision, noting:

Counselling in schools currently lacks firmly established and widely accepted professional guidelines, a robust evidence base in terms of its outcomes and effectiveness, and a strong

policy steer from central government or educational policy agencies (Jenkins and Polat, 2006, p. 10).

The apparent discrepancy between the demand for counselling for CYP and those with the specialist training to provide it has been the principal motivation for the work produced during my career to date, and specifically for the publications included in this thesis. Over the last twenty years my work as an author, researcher and trainer has contributed to the training and professional development of counsellors working with CYP. My output during this period includes training and CPD workshops, articles, chapters, three sole-authored books addressing the knowledge and skills required for effective and ethical counselling for CYP clients, a peer-reviewed research paper, and the clinical practice manual for a randomised-control trial (see section 1.6 below). The published work submitted as part of this thesis represents recent work that contributes to a model of integration of evidence-based knowledge and skills for counsellors working with CYP clients. As will be outlined in the body of this analytic commentary, each work contributes to the development of a comprehensive framework for the professional identity of counsellors working with CYP clients, e.g., ethical safeguarding; developmental understanding; theoretical basis for therapeutic approach; appropriate therapeutic skills; information sharing and multi-agency working. The work presented in this thesis demonstrates a sustained contribution through a range of publications to a synthesis of the core knowledge and skill-based components of counselling for CYP along with the development of a professional 'secure base' for counsellors working with this client group rooted in professional and ethical standards.

1.6 List of sole and co-authored publications in chronological order.

Kirkbride, R. (2015). *Counselling Children and Young People in Private Practice: A Practical Guide*. Routledge.

Kirkbride, R. (2016). *Effectiveness and Cost Effectiveness Trial of Humanistic Counselling in Schools (ETHOS): Clinical Practice Manual* (retrieved 06.06.23)

*Kirkbride, R. (2018a). *Counselling Young People: A Practitioner Manual*. BACP/Sage.

*Kirkbride, R. (2018b). 'Eating Disorders', in M. Robson and S. Pattinson (eds.) *The Handbook of Counselling Children and Young People*. 2nd Edition. Sage.

Kirkbride, R. (2018c). *Walking a Tightrope: The dilemmas of working with risky adolescents*.

BACP CPD Hub: www.BACP.co.uk/cpd/cpd-hub/

*Kirkbride, R. 2021. *Key Theories and Skills in Counselling Children and Young People: An Integrative Approach*. Sage.

*Kirkbride, R., Livanou, M., Longley, V., & Waring, S. M. (2023). 'Renegades, Outsiders and Lone Warriors': A qualitative study exploring perceptions of professional identity among counsellors working with children and young people in the United Kingdom'. *Pastoral Care in Education* (in press) doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2023.2214918

*Published work submitted as part of this thesis

1.7 Structure of the thesis.

The remainder of the thesis is structured into three further chapters. *Chapter 2* summarises the four publications of the thesis with information covering publication reference, project description and timeline. *Chapter 3* identifies and discusses the contribution of the publications to the thesis under three Contribution Domain headings. *Chapter 4* critically

discusses key methodological and ideological challenges presented by these publications and presents conclusions and recommendations for policy and future research. In this critical context I discuss intended further research including plans to promote and extend the use of qualitative research in the field of professional standards in the counselling professions.

Chapter 2: The publications.

This chapter provides a summary of each publication, presented below in table form, including project description and developmental timeline, context, and contribution of the publication to the overall thesis. The publications are ordered chronologically by publication or initial presentation date.

Pub.1: Kirkbride, R. (2018a). *Counselling Young People: A Practitioner Manual*. (BACP/Sage).

Pub. 2: Kirkbride, R. (2018b). 'Eating Disorders' in M. Robson & S. Pattinson eds. *The Handbook of Counselling Children and Young People* 2nd ed. Sage.

Pub. 3: Kirkbride, R. (2021) *Key Theories and Skills in Counselling Children & Young People: An Integrative Approach*. Sage.

Pub. 4: Kirkbride, R., Livanou, M., Longley, V., & Waring, S.M. (2023). "Renegades, Outsiders and Lone Warriors": A qualitative study exploring perceptions of professional identity among counsellors working with children and young people in the United Kingdom'. *Pastoral Care in Education*. doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2023.2214918

2.1 Published work in Summary.

2.1.1 Pub. 1. Kirkbride, R. (2018a). Counselling Young People: A Practitioner Manual. (BACP/Sage):

Project description and Timeline.

Pub. 1 translates the BACP (2014) framework into an accessible text-book, addressing a gap in the literature by delivering a research- and practice- informed approach for counselling CYP clients based on a BACP-commissioned Competence Framework.

Timeline:

October 2015: Proposal submitted in response to BACP's advertised competitive tender for development of a Practitioner Manual based on BACP (2014) Competence Framework.

December 2015: Notification of successful application and invitation from BACP to author the Practitioner Manual.

January 2016: Work began in collaboration with Susannah Trefgarne (Editor, Sage Books), and Dr Peter Pearce (Metanoia Institute) as editorial consultant.

April 2016-January 2017: Chapters reviewed by editorial consultant and sent for peer-review by the publisher, Sage Books.

Autumn 2017: Publication of Pub. 1.

Context:

The BACP (2014) Competence Framework was commissioned by BACP and is based on previously published frameworks: A Competence Framework for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (Roth et al., 2011), commissioned by NHS Education for Scotland, and The Competences Required to Deliver Effective Humanistic Psychological Therapies (Roth et al., 2009), commissioned by the Department of Health and Skills for Health England.

The BACP (2014) competences were adapted to ensure the framework covered the specific application of humanistic counselling for young people (Hill et al., 2013). The (2014) Competence Framework was the first published professional standards framework supporting counselling for CYP clients.

The aim of Pub. 1 was to provide an accessible text-book and practitioner manual that would ensure the competence framework could be embedded in CYP counselling course materials for the purposes of training and CPD activities without students and counsellors having to grapple with the framework document. The original competence framework document and list of competences and descriptors ran to 94 pages and around 26,000-words.

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/2335/bacp-competences-map-for-working-with-young-people.pdf> (retrieved 06.06.23)

Contribution to thesis:

Pub. 1 content maps directly onto the competence framework, integrating a body of theoretical knowledge with practical skills illustrated through use of fabricated clinical vignettes throughout.

Pub. 1 provides an integrated approach for counselling CYP, offering knowledge which can be used by practitioners from a range of theoretical approaches and modalities. This increases its relevance to all practitioners and could strengthen the professional identity of counsellors working with CYP, with all adhering to a comprehensive, pan-theoretical and non-modality specific set of professional standards.

In terms of impact, Pub. 1 was received positively by peer-reviewers during production of the manuscript (see appendix II.i). It is listed under 'Essential Reading' in the BACP (2020) training curriculum for counselling children and young people.

In the first three years post-publication, Pub. 1 sold 1972 copies; 1891 in paperback, 37 in hardback, and 44 e-books (see appendix II.i). Google scholar shows 9 academic citations for Pub. 1 to date (24.4.23). Testimonials were gathered by the Publishers, Sage, during the

initial peer-review process and subsequent marketing of the finished book (see appendix II.i).

Pub.1 was integral to the curriculum development and delivery of a new MA in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy for Children, Adolescents and Families validated by the University of Roehampton and convened by the author from 2018-23. It is a resource for other CYP counsellor trainings, including those delivered at York St John University and the Ellesmere Counselling service.

Pub. 4 (Kirkbride et al., 2023), investigated CYP counsellors' experiences and opinions regarding Pub. 1's influence on professional development and identity. Two of the themes developed in the study analysis indicated the potential value of this resource for counsellors in providing clarity and structure regarding CYP counsellor identity. Under master theme 3: 'Role of professional resources in formation and development of a professional identity', findings indicated the potential value of Pub. 1 for training counsellors new to the field as well as in supporting recruitment of appropriately trained and registered practitioners by non-counselling stakeholders such as Headteachers and Educational Psychologists.

2.1.2 Pub. 2 Kirkbride, R. (2018b). 'Eating Disorders' in M. Robson & S. Pattinson eds. *The Handbook of Counselling Children and Young People 2nd ed.* Sage.

Project description and Timeline:

Pub. 2 was written for the second edition of 'The Handbook of Counselling Children and Young People' (Robson and Pattinson, 2018).

Timeline:

October 2016: The chapter was commissioned by editor and then chair of the BACP 'Children, Young People and Families' division, Dr Maggie Robson. Dr Robson approached me regarding writing a chapter for the updated second edition of the Handbook. Dr Robson had read *Counselling Children and Young People in Private Practice: A Practical Guide* (Kirkbride, 2015), which contained a section exploring counselling approaches for working with CYP presenting with eating issues.

Spring 2018: Final draft completed for production.

Autumn 2018: Publication.

Context:

The 'Eating Disorders' chapter in the first edition of the Handbook (Allan et al., 2015), was authored by highly experienced researchers and medical practitioners in the field (Allan et al., 2015, p. 368). However, for the second edition, the editors sought an approach combining diagnostic understanding, research and clinical understanding of the aetiology and maintenance of eating disorders with a therapeutic approach suitable for counselling CYP outside of the remit of NHS inpatient and outpatient eating disorder services. This latter had been missing from the chapter in the first edition.

Given the number of CYP with eating disorders who are referred for counselling (Kirkbride, 2018b), there is a clear need for counsellors with appropriate training and supervision to be identified as competent to work with this group. This chapter presents a research-based

approach to counselling for CYP presenting with eating disorders below clinical thresholds, as well as for supporting CYP who are under the care of a psychiatric team or who have recently left in-patient care.

Contribution to the thesis:

The chapter was published in the 2nd edition of the Handbook (Robson and Pattinson, 2018), a core text for both trainee and qualified counsellors working with CYP clients.

Pub. 2 subsequently formed the basis for training on working with CYP clients with eating disorders, both on the MA I taught on and convened at the University of Roehampton, and for external organisations such as 'Headstrong' (<https://headstrongcounselling.co.uk>).

Training delivered July 2022.

2.1.3 Pub. 3 Kirkbride, R. (2021) Key Theories & Skills in Counselling Children & Young People: An Integrative Approach. Sage.

Project description and timeline.

Pub. 3 was developed to provide a text-book in support of training counsellors and psychotherapists in work with CYP clients aged 4-25 years, using an Integrative approach (Gilbert and Orlans, 2011). The Integrative approach taken in Pub. 3 takes the Integrative approach to adult therapy (Gilbert and Orlans, 2011) and adapts this for work with CYP by incorporating developmental implications for therapy along with contemporary environmental, legal, and contextual considerations for counsellors working with CYP clients (Kirkbride, 2021).

Timeline:

June 2019: Book proposal submitted to Sage for peer-review and editorial consideration.

November 2019: Contract signed with Sage and work on book begins.

October 2020: Full draft submitted to publisher.

July 2021: Publication.

Context:

I was appointed as programme convener for a new MA in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy for Children, Adolescent and Families at The University of Roehampton in 2018. I was keen to use this as an opportunity to develop a text-book in support of this modality and approach to counselling CYP. The structure of teaching on the MA was based on Pub. 1, but with an explicitly Integrative approach I developed for work with CYP aged 4-25 years (Kirkbride, 2021).

The editor of Pub. 1, Susannah Trefgarne, asked in 2017 when Pub. 1 was completed if I would be interested in developing a skills-focused book for CYP counsellor training, as this was an area she felt was underrepresented in the market at the time. I wrote a proposal for Pub. 3 based on the teaching and training I was developing at Roehampton, and in conjunction with editorial and peer-review staff working with Sage.

Contribution to the thesis:

Pub. 3 was developed as a CYP counselling skills book covering an Integrative approach to counselling for CYP clients (Kirkbride, 2021), and covering the contemporary issues affecting CYP emotional and psychological wellbeing. It outlines the underlying rationale and theories for these skills, before giving clear instruction, using case examples, on 'how-to' develop and sustain meaningful, effective and developmentally appropriate therapeutic relationships with CYP client. It begins by outlining important developmental processes in order to establish an understanding of the CYP client, informing the practical skills which can be successfully employed in therapy with this group.

The book outlines essential skills around contracting and assessment, including assessing for risk. The content covers a variety of contexts and settings for therapeutic work, including education, youth services and private practice. Pub. 3 contributes to the thesis as a resource supporting the provision of effective counselling for all CYP clients.

In writing the book my aim was to comprehensively cover counselling skills for working with CYP in a contemporary context. Chapters include: *Online Risk, Sexuality and Gender Issues, Cultural Competence, Neurodiversity, Visual and Hearing Impairment.*

2.1.4: Pub. 4 Kirkbride, R., Livanou, M., Longley, V., & Waring, S. M. (2023). "Renegades, Outsiders and Lone Warriors": A qualitative study exploring perceptions of professional identity among counsellors working with children and young people in the United Kingdom'. *Pastoral Care in Education* (in press).

Project description and timeline.

Pub. 4, a qualitative study, was undertaken to investigate how counsellors working with CYP understand their professional identity and whether this has been influenced by resources developed to establish professional standards. The study aimed to bridge gaps in understanding of professional identity among counsellors working with CYP by investigating individual practitioners' perceptions of professional identity as well as the influence of the Practitioner Manual (Kirkbride, 2018) and BACP Competence Frameworks (BACP, 2014/2019a) on professional development in the field.

Timeline:

July 2021: Ethical approval provided for study by Manchester Metropolitan University

Aug-Sept 2021: Participant Recruitment

Oct-Dec 2021: Semi-Structured Interviews conducted via Microsoft Teams

Jan-April 2022: Analysis of data and write-up

July 2022: Paper submitted to Pastoral Care in Education journal (PCiE) for peer-review

: Paper accepted for publication by Pastoral Care in Education (see appendix II.ii)

Context:

The empirical study from which Pub. 4 is derived was conducted as part of this PhD submission. The study was developed in collaboration with my doctoral supervisory team at Manchester Metropolitan University; Dr Maria Livanou, Dr Verity Longley and Dr Susan Waring. They are listed as co-authors on the paper. The interviews and analysis were conducted by myself as the principal researcher and author. I also wrote the study up for publication with support from the doctoral team regarding revisions to the paper.

A qualitative research protocol using semi-structured interviews was developed to investigate participants' perceptions of professional identity, their understanding of how this is perceived by others, and whether this had been influenced by the introduction of BACP (2014/19a) Competence Frameworks and Practitioner Manual (Kirkbride, 2018a). Data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith et al., 2009).

Phenomenology is a qualitative method which focuses on the study of human experience and consciousness (Moustakas, 1994) and was selected as an appropriate approach to a study exploring how counsellors experienced their own professional identity as well as how they experienced the perceptions of other professionals. The study was ideographic rather than nomothetic in that it was interested in individual experiences, as well as the links or themes emerging across participants (Beltz et al., 2016). Additionally, the analysis was conducted on each transcript in turn, generating 'Personal Experiential Themes, or PETS, prior to exploring themes across participant transcripts (Group experiential themes – 'GETS') (Smith and Nizza, 2021). However, the study contains elements of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019) in that the questions examined perceptions rather than focusing explicitly on participant experiences or how they make sense of their perspective or experience, and in that it looked for thematic patterns across data in an attempt to generalise the findings.

Participants were qualified counsellors working with CYP clients in England and Scotland. Purposive sampling was utilised to select participants able to provide relevant data. Seven participants were recruited, two identifying as male and five as female. All were practising in settings in the UK, seeing clients in educational contexts. Some of them additionally worked privately and/or in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Contribution to thesis:

Findings were organised under three master themes: individual perception of professional identity; others' perceptions of professional identity; role of resources on formation and development of professional identity. Sub-themes included: discomfort with concept of professionalism; misunderstandings and misconceptions; a desire for a recognised professional identity.

Findings suggest the provision of counselling for CYP clients could be enhanced by establishment of a recognised professional identity underpinned by required minimum training standards and leading to registration with a recognised professional body.

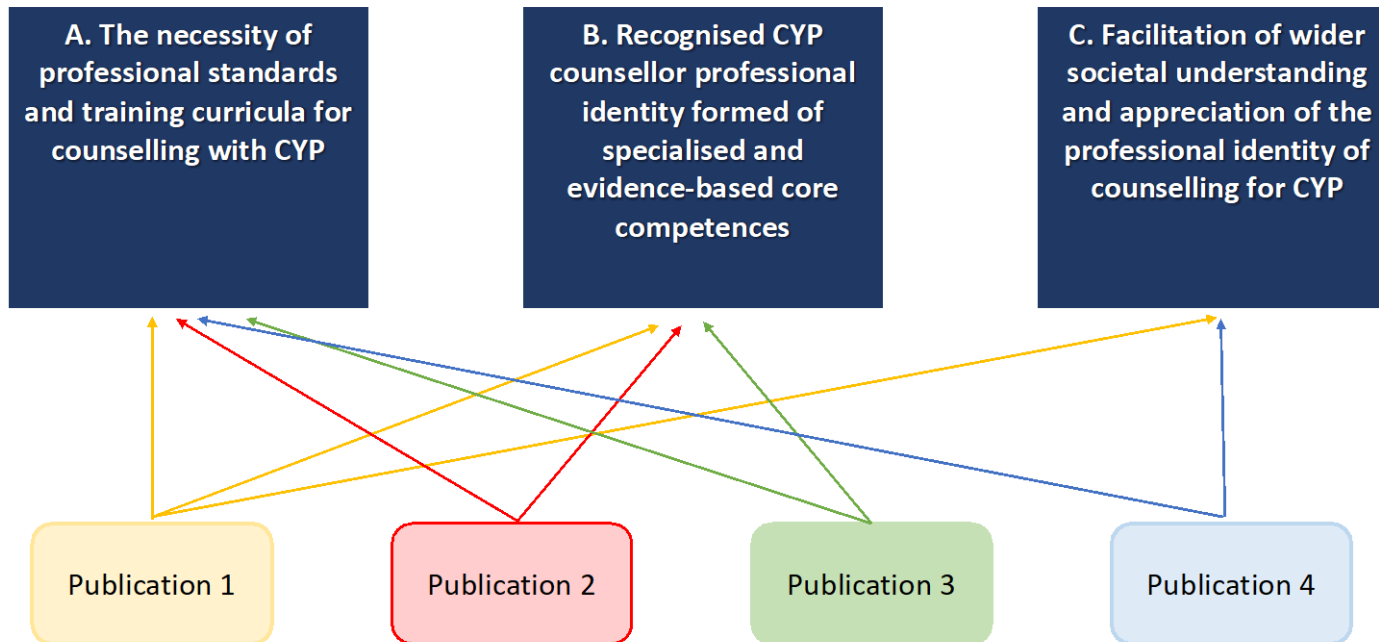
Chapter 3 Contribution of the Publications.

3.1: Introduction.

The present chapter offers a critical, integrative account of the contribution to knowledge, policy, and practice in the field of counselling CYP, of the four publications presented in this thesis. The combined knowledge is summarised into 3 main Contribution Domains. These Contribution Domains are presented and linked to the publications in figure 3.1 below. Each is described in detail in the following sections of this chapter.

Fig.3.1: Contribution Domains.

Figure 3.1 Contribution Domains



Note: The arrows indicate the domains to which each publication contributes

3.2 Contribution Domain A: The necessity of professional standards and training curricula for counselling CYP clients.

This thesis proposes that a recognised professional identity, based on an established set of professional standards and training curricula covering specialised knowledge and skills, is necessary for the effective and ethical provision of counselling for CYP. An overarching aim of the commentary and publications is to demonstrate the necessity of such standards for counselling CYP clients, and additionally provide a framework and resources to support the provision of such standards.

Pub. 1 disseminates the competence framework for use in core training of counsellors working with CYP clients, as well as for CYP counselling workshop and short courses for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and post-qualifying CYP training for adult-client trained counsellors. As an experienced therapist and author with an academic interest in the provision of professional and training standards in the field, I was keen to use the opportunity of writing the 'Practitioner Manual' to strengthen my contribution to the development of a clear professional identity for counsellors working with CYP clients.

A significant contribution made by Pub. 1 to the development of professional standards is inherent in its position as the first UK work combining the evidence-base and clear structure of the BACP (2014) competence framework with a broadly integrative approach to therapy with CYP clients. The introduction to Pub. 1 states the importance of placing, "...a fundamental emphasis on the relationship and connection between counsellor and young person, rather than on any technique or the expertise of the practitioner" (Kirkbride, 2018a, p.3). The work is founded in the humanistic approach (Rogers, 1951) to counselling, whilst

integrating knowledge and skills from other evidence-based models for counselling CYP clients, including psychodynamic, CBT and Emotion-Focused therapy (EFT) (Greenberg, 2010). The publication is novel in having as a foundation the competences required for counselling CYP clients, rather than a particular modality of therapy such as person-centred (Smyth, 2013), 'proactive' (Geldard et al., 2020), or psychoanalytic (Blake, 2008). This unique positioning of a competence framework (Roth and Pilling, 2008) as the foundation for the text enables it to disseminate universal professional standards in an accessible form to counsellors from a range of theoretical modalities and training backgrounds.

A 'Map of Competences' is included in the appendices of Pub. 1, allowing the reader or lecturer to easily refer to the BACP (2014) competence framework and identify how chapter contents fit within the overall framework. Each section of Pub. 1 links to individual and groups of related competences, providing the reader with a clear indication of what is required in terms of knowledge and skills at each stage of the counselling process with CYP clients. The introduction to Pub. 1 states how the reader can identify the competences within the text of the manual.

The study undertaken as part of this thesis and subsequently published as Pub. 4 (Kirkbride et al., 2023) sought to investigate the influence of Pub. 1 on the development of professional standards and professional identity for counsellors working with CYP clients. Concerns were expressed by one participant who perceived the competences as "reductionist" and potentially leading to a 'tick-box' mentality in CYP counsellor training. This is a risk the developers of the competence framework explicitly identify and warn against in the 'Counsellor's Guide', stating, "...implementation needs to be holistic:

competences tend to operate in synchrony, and the module should not be seen as a “rigid recipe for success”” (Hill et al., 2014, p.19). A limitation of the textbook in this respect could be that it is seen as contributing to a manualisation, industrialisation (Rizq and Jackson, 2019) or ‘instrumentalisation’ (Randall, 2017) of counsellor training, potentially reducing the value of ‘tacit’, practical knowledge and overemphasising the ‘explicit’ knowledge provided by textbooks and manuals in contrast with more experiential methods for training counsellors (Lowenthal, 2012). However, textbooks provide a vital tool for disseminating practical information and guidance regarding ethical practice and professional standards for specific audiences. The intended primary audience for Pub. 1 is trainee CYP counsellors who would be using it alongside classroom teaching delivered by experienced practitioners, as well as experiential and clinical practice-based training. Experienced counsellors using Pub. 1 to familiarise themselves with the BACP (2014/19) competences post-training could be expected to use their own critical faculties to determine and select those elements of the text that are relevant to their practice. The usefulness of a textbook is dependent on the quality of the content, as well as how it is presented and made use of by teachers and readers. While Pub. 1 may have successfully converted the somewhat unwieldy BACP (2014) competence framework into a more accessible textbook form, there are limitations to this form of dissemination of professional standards. Firstly, the relationship between reader and textbook arguably constitutes a “negotiation of meaning” (Tummons, 2014, p.421). The reader brings their own understandings and responses to the text which may or may not have been intended by the author. Additionally, there are limitations with any document in written form being able to adequately capture the domains and concepts it seeks to explicate (Tummons, 2014, p.421). One method of addressing this issue in Pub. 1 was to interweave case vignettes throughout the text to demonstrate a range of concepts. The

vignettes represent composites of clients from the author's clinical practice, fictionalised in order to protect confidentiality. This mirrors the pedagogic practice used by trainers in using clinical vignettes and examples to demonstrate the application of theory to clinical practice. An alternative to the use of vignettes could be the use of lived client experience or voices. While this could be argued to provide more genuine clinical examples, this would also represent a breach of client confidentiality and would be considered by most therapists to be an unethical use of client material, particularly in relation to the lived experience or 'real' voices of child and adolescent clients who may not have capacity to provide informed consent for the publication of content from their therapy sessions. Clinical vignettes provide an example of the 'practical' knowledge discussed by Lowenthal (2012) as distinct from manualised or 'technical' knowledge. At the time of writing Pub. 1, the author had over fifteen-years' experience in the field of counselling with CYP clients across a range of contexts, as well as a proven track-history of writing about clinical practice (Kirkbride, 2015) and therefore was able to 'bring-to-life' the competence framework through a synthesis of the framework with broad clinical experience in the field of counselling CYP.

A limitation of Pub. 1, and all textbook publications, is obsolescence. There are elements of CYP counselling practice that are inextricably linked to and influenced by changes in society and in law. For example government procedures in relation to safeguarding or sexual offences legislation are updated periodically, often in response to cases brought to court, such as in the recent Tavistock Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) case, *Bell v Tavistock* (<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Bell-v-Tavistock-Judgment.pdf> retrieved 6.6.23). A way of working with this potential for obsolescence, beyond producing updated editions, is to ensure readers understand the need to keep

abreast of legal and other developments within their field. This is a stated requirement within the BACP (2018) ethical framework for counsellors and psychotherapist (Working to professional standards – 14).

Clear professional standards provided in the form of competences, as in Pub. 1, offer a coherent structure for counsellor training programmes. The impact of Pub. 1's contribution to the provision of professional standards is indicated by the peer-review ([see Appendix II.i](#)), which offers an opinion that the book has succeeded in delivering a clear understanding of the BACP (2014) competence framework to readers of the manual ([See Appendix II.i](#)). This view was also supported by the findings of Pub. 4.

Pub. 2 can be seen as contributing to the provision of professional and training standards in the field of counselling young people presenting with eating issues. A primary aim in writing this chapter was to demonstrate that counsellors can develop the skills and competence to work effectively and appropriately with young clients with eating issues. Counsellors are frequently referred young people with disordered eating as school counsellors and in private practice, particularly where the client falls below the threshold for in-patient NHS or CAMHS support, as is often the case in my anecdotal experience.

Pub. 2 was published in the 'Handbook for Counselling Children and Young People 2nd edition' (Robson and Pattinson, 2018), commissioned by BACP as a textbook for counsellors working with CYP clients. The inclusion of Pub. 2 in the above, a textbook with contributing authors from the field of counselling for CYP clients, provides a clear contributory link for this chapter on the establishment of professional standards in the field. Further work could

be undertaken to establish the influence of the publication regarding the perception of counsellors as being equipped to work with CYP clients with disordered eating. This is elaborated on in chapter 4. A review on the publisher website from Caroline Jesper, the BACP Professional Standards Development Facilitator (now BACP Head of Professional Standards) described Pub. 1 as essential reading for any course training counsellors and psychotherapists to work with children (<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/the-handbook-of-counselling-children-young-people/book253922#reviews> – retrieved 6.6.23).

Pub. 3 integrates theory, research and safeguarding with an understanding of child development and how this can impact the therapeutic relationship and process (Kirkbride, 2021). Out of this integration of developmental understanding, theoretical approaches, research and clinical and contextual considerations emerge the skills and techniques that have been found to work effectively in therapeutic work with children and adolescents (BACP, 2019). Pub. 3 provides a comprehensive exposition of all aspects of training required for this work, along with the skills required for their application. Part I of Pub. 3 explores human development from a range of perspectives, including humanistic (Rogers, 1951), psychodynamic (Barber and Solomonov, 2016), and attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973). It considers cognitive, neurological and social development, from birth through adolescence. In developmental terms this means not only looking at biological influences on growth, but also on environmental and cultural experiences of children and young people in contemporary society, including issues around race and oppression (Velez and Spencer, 2018). This is known to be experienced not only directly by children in their everyday lives, but also indirectly through the intergenerational trauma which lies at the heart of many of our cultures and communities (Velez and Spencer, 2018). Throughout Pub. 3, I consider the importance of

understanding and engaging with this trauma if counsellors are to provide effective interventions and culturally competent services for all who might benefit from effective therapeutic support.

As explored elsewhere in the thesis, in recent years, there have been significant advances in the field of counselling CYP. BACP competence frameworks (2014; 2019), as well as the BACP training curriculum and research trials into the efficacy and effectiveness of child counselling and psychotherapy (Cooper et al., 2021). These represent a significant strengthening of the foundations for a contemporary approach to this field and are an integral part of my own practice and of this book.

At the time of writing Pub. 3, significant shifts in personal and societal paradigms were occurring, precipitated in part by the global COVID-19 pandemic, the 'Black Lives Matter' movement and the ongoing impact of the climate crisis (Godsay and Brodsky, 2018; Holt and Murray, 2022; Sanson et al., 2019). These shifts offered opportunities for positive change for society as a whole as well as precipitating fears and anxiety for many groups and individuals. Children and adolescents who have been in the process of development in these times benefit from spaces of support and calm in which to process the developmental impact of these and other factors impacting them on their journey towards adulthood (Singh et al., 2020). Pub. 3 was intended to support the development and practice of all those stepping forward to provide valuable service through the provision of relational counselling for children and adolescents.

Pub. 4 findings indicated the need for clear professional identity and standards in the field of CYP counselling, along with acknowledging the significant contribution of the BACP (2014/2019a) Competence Framework and Pub. 1 in this respect.

Publication in a peer-reviewed journal in the field of pastoral care in education strengthens the contribution of Pub. 4 to professional standards in the field of CYP counselling. The themes forming the study findings identified current issues in the field related to a lack of established professional standards. As one of the peer-reviewers for PCiE noted, the work is,

...original, timely and examines an under-researched area, that of the complex 'landscape' of school counselling requiring team-working by a variety of professionals. This assumes a comfortable alignment of these different professionals to work towards a shared understanding of objectives and outcomes. To question this therefore, in terms of potentially conflicting professional agendas and discourses is a viable line of enquiry, particularly when 'professional identity' is used as a mechanism to reveal the positionality of the professionals concerned (See [appendix II.iii](#)).

A limitation of Pub. 4 was the lack of exploration of the impact of culture, equality, diversity and inclusion within in the study. It would be useful and relevant to conduct a similar study exploring CYP counsellors' experience of cultural background, or identification on their professional identity as CYP practitioners. This could be further expanded to examine the influence of counsellor's experiences on the client and client outcome. The area of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) on counsellor training and client experience is something I am currently engaged with in my role for BACP. There is scope within the work BACP are

undertaking to embed EDI within course and service accreditation criteria to use impact and outcome measures to establish how professional identity develops during training, especially for those identifying as coming from minority or marginalised backgrounds, and the perceived impact of this identity on the therapeutic relationship and client outcomes.

3.3 Contribution Domain B: Recognised CYP counsellor professional identity formed of specialised and evidence-based core competences.

Chapter one made the case for training in specialised knowledge and skills competences as necessary for provision of effective counselling for CYP. The following section examines contributions of the publications to supporting the development of competence in this regard.

The first chapter of Pub. 1 is an exploration of CYP development through a range of theoretical and psychological lenses. These include theories of cognitive development, an understanding of which can be vital when contracting for confidential counselling with CYP clients who must be assessed for their capacity to consent to counselling, according to the legal principle of 'sufficient understanding' (Children Acts, 1985 and 2004; Kirkbride, 2015).

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973) is understood to offer counsellors an understanding of psychological and behavioural issues related to insecure attachment, as well as providing therapeutic strategies for working with these via the therapeutic process (Pearce and Pezzot-Pearce, 1994). In Pub. 1, attachment theory is explicated as a lens through which to assess a client's capacity to form a therapeutic relationship, including their capacity to form

an emotional bond, viewed by Bordin (1979) as a central component of the therapeutic working alliance. This is an example of the developmental approach which forms the foundation for the subsequent chapters exploring broader competences for counselling CYP clients.

While Pub.1 comprehensively presents the competences for therapeutic work with young people (see appendix iv), it does not include competences for work with younger children, now included in the BACP (2019a) competence framework for therapeutic work with CYP aged 4-18 years. Due to its focus on the older 11-18 years age-group, the book does not specifically address the provision of counselling for younger children. As discussed in the introductory section, there are different knowledge and skills requirements for working with clients at various developmental phases. However, Pub. 1 does include a chapter titled 'Using Creative and Symbolic Interventions' which states in the introduction that these, "...can be particularly useful in work with young people who find talking through their issues difficult and/or with those for whom this is a more developmentally appropriate intervention" (Kirkbride, 2018a, p.91). In a subsequent publication the author has provided a text addressing counselling skills and theories for work with clients from 4-18 years (Kirkbride 2021).

Pub. 2 outlines a knowledge base and skill set for counselling CYP presenting with eating issues. A strength of the chapter is in the approach it takes to the significance of the therapeutic relationship in counselling adolescents with eating disorders, with an acknowledgement regarding the specific issues that clients with eating disorders bring to the therapeutic relationship, e.g. the ambivalence of the client regarding recovery where

that requires them to gain weight and/or reduce behaviours aimed at losing or maintaining an excessively low-weight (Lask and Wiig Hage, 2013). Eating disorders present significant challenges to forming a treatment alliance where recovery is ego-dystonic for the client (Lask and Wiig Hage, 2013). Research findings suggest greater alliances between therapists and clients have consistently yielded better treatment outcomes, whilst acknowledging the challenges of establishing a strong alliance with clients with eating disorders (Groth and Hilsenroth, 2021). As identified in Pub. 2, the authors suggest that clients with anorexia nervosa wish to stay thin while therapists strive to guide them to a healthy weight, citing this disparity in treatment goals as contributing to issues in the therapeutic alliance, including lack of therapist' objectivity and attunement (Groth and Hilsenroth, 2021, p.105). Pub. 2 provides focused guidance for counsellors in developing the skills to work with this ambivalence via an integration of humanistic counselling skills such as empathy and a non-judgemental approach along with proven interventions such as Motivational Interviewing (Miller and Rollnick, 2013).

A limitation of Pub. 2's contribution is that it focuses on work with adolescent clients with restricting or purging disorders as these are the most clinically prevalent eating disorder presentations (Bryant-Waugh and Lask, 2013). However, eating issues are found increasingly frequently in younger children, and in forms other than anorexia or bulimia nervosa (Bryant-Waugh and Lask, 2013) and a chapter identifying skills for working with these groups would arguably extend an understanding of the role of counselling and counsellors in providing treatment to these clients.

Pub. 3 was developed as a skills-focussed textbook offering a comprehensive skills approach to work with CYP clients. Part II explores the therapeutic relationship, arguably the central component of the therapeutic process (Bordin, 1979). This provides a foundation for the reader as they gain or strengthen knowledge and skills for establishing and sustaining the therapeutic relationship. Pub. 3 considers the key principles of Integrative practice, founded in the core relational conditions of the Humanistic approach (Rogers, 1951) and informed by psychodynamic understandings of inter-relational and intrapsychic dynamics. There are practical skills for contracting, limit-setting and assessment, among other topics central to the provision of counselling for CYP clients. Part III continues the focus on skills development begun in Part II, growing from the secure base of the core relationship components and therapeutic alliance. This part provides examples of a variety of interventions with CYP, including play-based work and CYP-focused Cognitive-Behavioural therapy. The evidence-base for the clinical application of these interventions is considered, while exploring the important integration of research and practice for the contemporary practitioner. Overall, this book provides a uniquely comprehensive guide for the therapist or student working with CYP in contemporary society.

The structure of Pub. 3 is designed to reflect the dynamic nature of psychotherapeutic counselling with CYP clients. It is set out in four parts, each containing entries which can be read consecutively or moved between dynamically in a way which, is intended to parallel the readers' experience of training in and practising therapy with children and adolescents.

3.4 Contribution Domain C: Facilitation of wider societal understanding and appreciation of the professional identity of counselling for CYP.

In chapter one I argued the need for wider understanding of the professional identity and competence of counsellors working with CYP clients by a range of stakeholders such as government and third-sector funding bodies, educational providers, and young people and their families. In the following section I will outline the contribution of the submitted publications to the facilitation of this understanding.

Pub. 1 is specifically aimed at supporting the development of competences based on the BACP (2014) Competence Framework and establishing professional standards in the field of counselling for CYP clients. Alongside the primary aim of this publication to develop understanding of the competences that the CYP counsellor professional identity is founded upon, it also indirectly assists non-counsellors and allied professionals in understanding this identity. It was apparent from the findings of Pub. 4 that there is a lack of clarity regarding the professional identity by professionals working in associated areas such as education, clinical and educational psychology as well as in CAMHS. While Pub. 1 is aimed at readers from the counselling profession, arguably an enhanced sense of professional identity among practitioners provides them with clarity regarding what they can provide as counsellors as well as the limits of their role will support counsellors in explaining their role to others. This argument is outlined and supported by the findings of Pub. 4.

Pub. 4 was developed to investigate perceptions of professional identity among counsellors working with CYP clients. One aim of the study was to explore how participants perceived their professional identity as understood by the non-counsellor professionals they work alongside. The study provided an empirical rationale for the need for a clear professional identity for counsellors working with CYP clients, as the transcripts demonstrated participants experienced a significant degree of misunderstanding of the identity among other professionals. As previously stated, the publication of the study findings in a peer-reviewed journal in the field of pastoral care in education is significant in contributing to a wider understanding of the specific professional identity of counsellors working with CYP clients in educational settings. Further research is required to fully appreciate the success of Pub. 1 and Pub. 4 in enhancing the professional identity of counsellors working with CYP clients.

Chapter 4: Critical Reflection.

In this final chapter, I reflect on some of the important methodological and ideological issues inherent in the work presented in this thesis, through a critical lens. I examine the publications and their place in the field, and state proposed directions for future research in this area. Secondly, I explore some ideological arguments around professionalism and professional identity in counselling and psychotherapy, including arguments regarding instrumentalisation. Thirdly, I discuss implications for policy and practice in counselling for CYP clients. The final part of this chapter describes my intentions for taking the learning I have gained as a researcher forward into my current role as Accreditation Lead within the Professional Standards team at BACP.

4.1 Critical reflections on the publications.

As outlined in chapter 1, the professional field of counselling for CYP clients has historically lacked established and nationally recognised professional standards, as well as a specific registration for counsellors working with CYP clients. The thesis argues that the submitted publications make a scholarly contribution to address these gaps, and provide evidence of a commitment and contribution to the development of the core knowledge, skills and professional and ethical standards needed to establish a recognised professional identity for counsellors working with CYP.

Publications 1-3 contribute to the thesis through their practical application to counsellor training, supervision, research, and CPD. Pub. 4 findings give some indication that Pub. 1 and the BACP (2014) CYP competence framework have had a positive impact in terms of

providing a recognised framework of standards for delivery, with Pub. 1 supporting delivery of trainings based on the competences. However, further research is required to establish how widely this view is held among a larger, and potentially more representative, group of CYP counsellors in the UK. Additionally, more data could be gathered to examine outcome regarding to what extent these standards are embedded in the field, as well as what impact this is having on client outcome and the provision of counselling services to CYP. In my current role within the Professional Standards team at BACP I am developing a new specialist accreditation scheme for individual counsellors working with CYP, as well as for accreditation of CYP counselling training courses.

BACP has a long history of accrediting training courses, and as stated on their [website](https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/organisational-membership/course-accreditation/) (<https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/organisational-membership/course-accreditation/> - [retrieved](#) 06.06.23), “BACP course accreditation is recognised by training providers, employers and students as the mark of a high quality, professional practitioner training courses”. Previously BACP course accreditation has used generic criteria developed to capture training standards for adult client-focused training courses. The development of course accreditation criteria specific for CYP client-focused counsellor training will represent a significant step forward in terms of establishing recognised professional standards for CYP counsellors. Along with the CYP course accreditation scheme, I am developing an individual specialist CYP accreditation scheme for counsellors who have completed either core or post-qualifying training in the knowledge and skills areas outlined in this thesis and supported by the submitted publications. The development of these CYP course and individual accreditation schemes is possible due to the evidence-base produced by the BACP competence frameworks (BACP, 2014/19), training curricula (BACP, 2020) along with Pub. 1

(Kirkbride, 2018a) and other resources. In the following section I will explore the role of competence frameworks in establishing an evidence-base for counselling practice, as well as some critiques of this method.

4.1.1 Competence frameworks and their use in Randomised Control Trials.

The BACP (2014/19) competence frameworks, on which Pub. 1 is based, were derived from earlier frameworks which used the Roth and Pilling (2008) methodology for establishing therapist competences for a range of clinical interventions and client groups (Owen-Pugh and Symons, 2013). The Roth and Pilling (2008) methodology was originally utilised for a CBT competence framework before being applied subsequently, and somewhat controversially due to its perceived alignment with the NHS medical model, to Person-Centred therapy (Sanders and Hill, 2014). An early framework was developed for a 'Counselling for Depression' (CfD) intervention, subsequently titled 'Person-Centred Experiential Counselling for Depression' (PCE-CfD), providing a training route, and recognised professional identity for work by counsellors in the NHS. The developers of the CfD framework suggest it came about in response to the 'threat' posed to counselling by the introduction of IAPT in the NHS (Sanders and Hill, 2014). In the text-book supporting delivery of CfD, the authors acknowledge that in developing the CfD model, they engaged "...with institutions and philosophical frameworks" (2014, p.2), eg. 'medicalised' models of psychological distress, which are perceived as being at odds with person-centred and humanistic thinking. They argue that a failure to engage in this way would have had "widespread negative consequences" (2014, p.2) for person-centred therapy, counsellors employed or seeking employment opportunities in primary care, as well as members of the

public who may otherwise have not been able to access humanistic counselling interventions within free-at-the-point-of-use health services within the UK.

Competence frameworks have further contributed to the evidence-base for counselling interventions through their use to provide manualised interventions necessary for randomised-control trials (RCT). In the case of PCE-CfD, the 'PRACTICeD trial' (Saxon et al., 2017), provided an acceptable evidence-base to allow PCE-CfD's inclusion in NICE guidelines, and as an IAPT treatment of depression in primary-care in the UK (NHS IAPT manual, 2021). The PCE-CfD competence framework and PRACTICeD trial have been successful in terms of the development of NHS-approved training routes for counsellor training, accredited by the BACP (NHS IAPT manual, 2021). In September 2022, a pilot began at the Metanoia Institute in London to deliver a 3-year fully NHS-funded training in PCE-CfD led by NHS Talking-Therapies in partnership with a group of PSA-accredited counselling membership bodies, including BACP (<https://www.metanoia.ac.uk/programmes/career-development-pathways/nhs-psychotherapeutic-counselling-programme-person-centred-experiential-counselling-for-depression-pathway/> - retrieved 06.06.23). Once this three-year pilot has been completed and evaluated, the hope is that this will offer an ongoing route for counsellors into the NHS psychotherapeutic workforce. As a representative of BACP on the Quality Assurance panel for the PCE-CfD pilot, I will have an overview of the potential for the development of similar routes for CYP counsellors within the NHS.

During 2016, a RCT ('Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of humanistic counselling in schools for young people with emotional distress' (ETHOS) trial), into School-Based Humanistic Counselling (SBHC) based on the BACP (2014) competence framework was

conducted by a research team led by Professor Mick Cooper of the University of Roehampton (Stafford et al., 2018; Cooper et al., 2021). As contracted author of the Practitioner Manual, I was contracted to provide an abridged version of Pub. 1 (Kirkbride, 2018a) to be used as clinical practice (CP) manual (Kirkbride, 2016) for the SBHC intervention to be delivered by counsellors in the RCT. Alongside the CP manual, a measure 'Person Centred and Experiential Psychotherapy Scale' (PCEPS) (Freire et al., 2014) was used to provide a measure for therapist adherence to the CP manual during the trial. The findings of the trial were that the intervention was broadly successful in reducing psychological distress, but not necessarily cost-effective. The authors (Cooper et al., 2021) suggest that further evaluation of alternative interventions in school is indicated. Increasingly, counselling services for CYP need to demonstrate that interventions are effective, and outcome measures are a proven method of achieving this (McArthur and Cooper, 2018). Process measures additionally provide insight into how the client has experienced their therapist or counselling sessions and whether particular ways of working are more effective than others, providing valuable evidence of which interventions are most appropriate for which clients. Outcome and process measures also offer young people an important opportunity to speak about their experience of counselling (Duncan et al., 2006; Kirkbride, 2021). Both Pub. 1 and Pub. 3 include content supporting practitioners in the use of outcome and process measures in therapeutic work with CYP clients.

The ETHOS trial was the recent recipient of the [BACP Excellence in Research Award](#) at the 2023 BACP Research Conference.

In the following section I will discuss the potential for the further use of the BACP competence frameworks in empirical trials.

4.1.2 Future research directions.

Given the proven use of competence frameworks as the basis for empirical trials of therapeutic interventions, an avenue of future research I am keen to explore is the identification and isolation of specific competences or groups of competences in the existing BACP (2014/2019) CYP frameworks for empirical testing. The Roth and Pilling (2008) methodology for developing competence frameworks includes the use of key texts and publications for identifying and isolating relevant competences. Using this methodology, Pub. 2 or 3 for example could be used in the development of competence frameworks for counselling CYP with eating issues and/or for counselling CYP with risk-taking behaviour. These could subsequently be developed into manuals and/or text-books for use in clinical trials and further empirical study, including RCT's. A method for this has been demonstrated in the manualised use of the CfD competences in the 'PRACTICeD trial' (Saxon et al., 2017), and for the revised version of Pub. 1 used in the ETHOS trial (Cooper et al., 2021; Kirkbride, 2016). Competence-based interventions could lead to the development of training curricula, short CPD courses, and as part of required additional training routes for counsellors trained to work with adult clients who want to complete training in CYP counselling. Following further trials, there could be scope a revised manualised version of Pub. 1 to be integrated into current CYP-focused NHS Talking Therapies provision for CYP, in a similar manner to PCE-CfD.

4.2 Critical reflections on professional identity and instrumentalisation in counselling and psychotherapy.

The development of a professional identity of counsellor based on adherence to competence frameworks may be perceived to be at odds with counselling epistemology, especially by those from person-centred as well as some psychoanalytic training backgrounds (House and Lowenthal, 2009; Rizq, 2012). Their view is that the instrumentalisation of therapeutic intervention has the potential to disregard the humanity of clients and their individual needs, by perceiving and treating human distress through medicalised epistemological and ideological lenses (Scott, 2010; Rizq, 2012; Jackson and Rizq, 2019; Sanders, 2023). The lenses are seen as those of the prevailing government, and critique is frequently couched as a response to the origins of IAPT as part of a 1990's New Labour ideology which conceptualised the importance of addressing societal mental health problems in order to reduce sickness absence in the workforce and support the growth of the national economy (Rizq, 2012; Jackson and Rizq, 2019). Foucault (1988) viewed technology as 'instrumentalisation' when an expert system comprised of a set of applied skills, techniques and practices is used as a means of achieving a stated object of increased mastery or control (Foucault 1988; Hooks, 2010). Instrumentalisation so defined operates both on a macro level in terms of institutionally-operated systems of control, and in the individual through "technologies of self", whereby "technologies of subjectivity" become, "enfolded into the person through a variety of schema of self-inspection, self-suspicion, self-disclosure, self-nurturance" (Rose, 1996a, p.32). The argument is that instruments of subjectivity enable the operations of government to be expressed in the knowledgeable management of the person. When applied to the context of this thesis and published work,

Foucault's argument might be that the counsellor who engages with self-awareness and reflexivity in the development of their professional identity cannot help but be influenced by the instrumentalisation inherent in a competence framework developed by or in accordance with the requirements of a powerful authority such as the government (IAPT, NHS etc.) or professional membership body such as the BACP. This can be contrasted with the ideas regarding professionalism articulated in Chapter 1, such as those of Freidson (1970) who argued that the "distinctive autonomy" of a profession depends on it receiving state recognition as acknowledgement of its value to wider society, rather than simply operating in service of prevailing governmental structures and economic policies. These contrasting views of professional identity and regulation of the profession are held in contention in the counselling professions. This will continue to be debated as discussions continue regarding whether statutory regulation of counselling and psychotherapy is required to protect clients from malpractice and ensure effective interventions are available to all, or whether less regulation and instrumentalisation is needed to ensure the unique quality of individual clients is not lost.

The view of this author is that this debate could be resolved via a 'both...and' approach, and that these concerns, however valid and necessary, need not completely deny the attempt at developing a professional identity focused on protecting clients and the use of RCT's and manuals for developing an empirical basis for counselling CYP clients that will enable more to benefit from effective and ethical interventions. However, what may be of note is that, while counsellors and psychotherapists as a group believe they are acting in the service of helping individuals, couples and groups with their general wellbeing, there are significant differences in how wellbeing and what this means for individuals, groups and society as a

whole is perceived and understood by the profession as a whole. As debates arise regarding areas of cultural and social experience such as relationship and gender diversity, critical race theory, and progressive views on our understanding and treatment of disability, further divisions are arising regarding what constitutes wellbeing, and whether the wellbeing of one person can be placed above that of another. This is exemplified in the field of gender issues where the views of those coming from a 'gender critical' position contend with those adopting a 'gender affirming' position on areas such as the rights of trans adults to identify as the gender they choose, due to particular views on the supremacy of biological sex (Zanghellini, 2020). While some therapists have chosen to take a position on the function of therapy in promoting social-justice (Cooper, 2023; Turner, 2021), others see this as problematic in terms of therapist neutrality, or as being in contention with their own gender critical or anti-woke points of view (Thomas, 2023). This context is provided as a demonstration of the challenges and barriers to developing a coherent professional identity for counsellors and psychotherapists in the contemporary context in which they deliver their therapeutic services.

4.3 Implications for policy and practice in counselling for CYP clients.

4.3.1 The need for further investigation of professional identity.

The above demonstrates the need for an important tension to be held by counselling and psychotherapy regarding professional standards and identity for practitioners. While there are useful critiques regarding competence frameworks and use of manualised interventions in counselling and psychotherapy, there is also a need to ensure clarity regarding the specific knowledge and skills required for delivering effective counselling for CYP clients across a range of contexts. There is a question to be addressed regarding whether it is

possible to introduce standards and competences to a profession while also recognising the uniqueness of each client and the importance of providing counselling based on their need, rather than a prescribed intervention based on the requirements of prevailing power-structures. Pub. 4 aimed to investigate how professional identity is understood by counsellors working with CYP clients. However, what emerged from the qualitative interviews was a sense of unease among some with the concept of professional identity. While this was an important finding, there remains a need to further understand if these are views held by the majority of CYP counsellors, as well as develop understanding of the components of professional identity and how these are understood to develop, both through counsellor training as well as in their post-qualifying clinical experience. Further research needs to examine key components of professional identity is required. It may be that a quantitative approach through statistical analysis of questionnaires regarding this would provide a useful starting place for this work.

4.3.2 The SCoPEd framework and implications for counselling for CYP clients.

This thesis argues that the fundamental implications for policy and practice in counselling for CYP are that this is best served by the provision of a nationally recognised professional standards for its delivery. As mentioned previously, BACP, along with six other PSA-accredited professional bodies have recently adopted the 'Scope of Practice and Education' (SCoPEd) framework, setting out core training, practice and competence requirements for counsellors and psychotherapists working with adult clients (SCoPEd 2022, <https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/14435/scoped-framework-january-2022.pdf> retrieved 6.6.23). While the current SCoPEd framework does not include competences for work with CYP, the adoption of the framework by the partners indicates a willingness to move the

profession in the direction of establishing professional standards enshrined in distinct professional identities. As mentioned previously, BACP is now in the process of developing specialist accreditations for practitioners who can demonstrate, through training and practice experience, that they meet established competences for counselling CYP clients. In my role with BACP, I have a leading role regarding these developments, based on some of the work contained in the thesis. Once fully implemented, the SCoPEd framework will provide clarity regarding professional identity for public and stakeholders, differentiating between those trained to work with adult clients, and those who have completed further training and practice to meet the requirements to be identified as competent to work with CYP clients, either in addition to their adult practice or as their core professional identity. Once the framework has been fully integrated by the SCoPEd partners, there will be enormous potential for evaluation of the framework in terms of practice informed by the framework vs. practice as usual.

4.4 Conclusions.

In conclusion, there is evidence of a growing need for counselling to be available to all CYP who would benefit from the support and interventions that counselling can provide.

Counselling needs to be as widely available as possible to ensure services are present where CYP are most likely to access them, for example in educational settings. The establishment of professional standards and a professional identity for counsellors working with CYP has previously lagged behind those of child and adolescent psychotherapists registered by the ACP with clear training and practice requirements. Given that the routes to train in child and adolescent psychotherapy are highly specialised and limited in terms of the numbers who can train, as well as the considerable waiting lists and difficulty for clients and families in

meeting criteria needed to access CAMHS services, the provision of high-quality counselling for CYP in the UK is arguably more important than ever. However, historic gaps in professional standards and training requirements for counsellors working with CYP has led to a lack of clarity regarding this professional identity and the competences required for effective counselling services. This thesis presents the submitted publications and their broad contribution across several domains to the practice and profession of counselling for CYP clients. Pub. 4 demonstrates the importance of the competence framework, the role of Pub. 1 in its dissemination, and these are now providing a foundation for the development of specialised accreditation schemes for registration and accreditation of counsellors who can evidence the competence required for practice with CYP clients. Additionally, Pub. 4 sheds further light on the current state of the field and where further work is required to support the provision of effective and much-needed counselling interventions for CYP.

In future my aim is to continue in my current role with BACP overseeing individual, service and course accreditation schemes, aligned with the SCoPEd framework, and including specialist accreditation for counsellor training courses in CYP-focused practice and for individual CYP counsellor accreditation. This development is not something I could have foreseen at the beginning of the process of undertaking these studies, although now seems a natural progression given the areas I have chosen to focus on as a practitioner, academic and researcher over a twenty-year career. In the process of completing this thesis I believe I have gained unique understanding and expertise regarding the processes and critiques of professional identity development, as well as coming across areas of contention regarding professional identity. This thesis has clearly demonstrated the contributions my work has

made to the profession of counselling, as well as the work still required to strengthen the competence and professional identity of counsellors working with CYP clients.

(15,226 words)

Please note that while the author is currently an employee of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, the views stated in this thesis are her own and not those of BACP.

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Appendices

Appendix I: the publications of the thesis

Appendix I.i [Pub. 1](#) (accessed 31.7.23)

Appendix I.ii [Pub. 2](#) (accessed 31.7.23)

Appendix I.iii [Pub. 3](#) (accessed 31.7.23)

Appendix I.iv Pub. 4 Available at: [Pub. 4 pdf](#) or
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02643944.2023.2214918>

Appendix II: supplementary materials

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Appendix II.i: [Sage Books Data](#)

Appendix II.ii: [Pub. 4 Journal \(PCiE\) Acceptance Email](#)

Appendix II.iii: [Pub. 4 Original Decision letter](#)

Appendix II.iv: [BACP \(2014\) Map of YP Competences](#)

Appendix II.i Sage Books Data

SAGE Publications Rebecca Kirkbride

Title: *Counselling Young People: a practitioner's manual*

Author: Rebecca Kirkbride

Copublished with: BACP

Webpage: <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/counselling-young-people/book250041#description>

Pub date: Nov-17

Price: £26.99 pb / £83.00 hb

Total sales: 1,972 copies (pb: 1891; hb 37; ebk 44)

Book description:

This groundbreaking book takes a humanistic approach to counselling young people, establishing humanistic counselling as an evidence-based psychological intervention.

Chapters cover:

- Therapeutic models for counselling young people
- Assessment and the therapeutic relationship
- Practical skills and strategies for counselling young people
- Ethical and legal issues
- Research and measuring and evaluating outcomes
- Counselling young people in a range of contexts and settings.

Grounded in the BACP's competencies for working with young people, this text is vital reading for those taking a counselling young people course or broader counselling and psychotherapy course, for qualified counsellors working with this client group, and for trainers.

Books reviews:

Feedback and reviews from lecturers:

Students and lecturers have been waiting for a text like this which is thorough and thoughtfully put together. It synthesises theory and practice in way that is readable and applicable to CYP counselling work in the real world.

Edith Bell

Director of Counselling, Familyworks

I welcome this important new guide for practitioners, which builds on the BACP's Competences for humanistic counselling with young people (11-18 years) (BACP, 2014) to support counsellors to develop effective, ethical and evidence-based practice with children and young people.

Dr Naomi Moller
BACP Head of Research

A comprehensive, accessible and contemporary guide to counselling practice with young people. The book addresses a range of issues that have become essential to the field, including cultural competence, the use of measures, and working across contexts and agencies.

Professor Mick Cooper
Professor of Counselling Psychology, University of Roehampton

Rebecca's book is a 'must have' for all therapists working with young people. It is comprehensive and contains the answers to everything that you might wonder about when working in this field - development; theory and practice; professional and practice issues; context and settings.

Dr Margaret Robson
Senior Teaching Fellow in Counselling, Keele University

Book title: *The Handbook of Counselling Children and Young People* Second Edition

Editors: Sue Pattison and Maggie Robson

Contributing author: Rebecca Kirkbride

Chapter title: Eating Disorders

Book webpage: <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/the-handbook-of-counselling-children-young-people/book253922>

Pub date: Aug-18

Price: £35.99 pb / £98.00 hb

Sales: 2,846 (Pb 2,659; Hb 41; Ebk 142)

Book description:

Expert authors from a wide range of backgrounds bring together the fundamentals of counselling practice with children and young people in this landmark handbook. It covers all your students need to know about theory and practice approaches, the counselling process, and practice issues and settings. This second edition is updated with the latest developments and research in an ever-changing field, and includes new content on:

- Diversity and difference
- Mental illness
- Safeguarding and risk assessment
- Child and young people's development
- Attachment theory and application

Each chapter includes a chapter introduction and summary, reflective questions and activities, helping trainees to cement their learning. With chapters contributed by leading specialists and academics in the field, this book is essential reading for trainees and practitioners working with children and young people.

Reviews:

[to insert once received from Marketing]

Feedback from lecturers:

"...essential reading for any course training counsellors and psychotherapists to work with children."

Caroline Jesper
BACP Professional Standards Development Facilitator

Readable and engaging. I enjoyed the various challenges to traditional thinking, which ensure that the reader has the most up-to-date knowledge.

Lynn Martin
BACP

This book is the top choice for me in counselling children and young people

Ms Carol Lloyd
Department of Counselling, Chichester University
July 16, 2021

<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/>

A clear and effective guide covering all key aspects of counseling children and young people.
Thoroughly recommended

Mr Dominic Games
Health & Social Care Team, Amersham And Wycombe College
December 1, 2020

<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/>

This book is well written and is accessible for both qualified and trainee counsellors. A wide range of theoretical approaches are covered within, along with practical elements of counselling. The discussion questions are particularly helpful and thought provoking.

Mrs Louise Allen
Counselling Department, Riverside College Halton
December 18, 2019

Pastoral Care in Education - Decision on Manuscript ID RPED-2022-0042.R2

Pastoral Care in Education <onbehalf@manuscriptcentral.com>

Wed 12/04/2023 11:40

To: Rebecca Kirkbride <REBECCA.KIRKBRIDE@stu.mmu.ac.uk>

This email originated from outside of Manchester Met. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and believe the content to be safe. Please contact the IT ServiceDesk if you have any concerns, <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/about-us/professional-services/itd/about/contact>

12-Apr-2023 Dear Rebecca,

Ref: "Renegades, Outsiders and Lone Warriors": A qualitative study exploring perceptions of professional identity among counsellors working with children and young people in the United Kingdom.

I have now considered your resubmitted paper and am pleased to be able to recommend publication in Pastoral Care in Education. We are pleased to accept your paper in its current form which will now be forwarded to the publisher for copy editing and typesetting. Thank you for your patience with the protracted review process for which I apologise.

You will receive proofs for checking, and instructions for transfer of copyright in due course. There is just one typo in the new sentence you added on page 8 ("practiced" should read "practised") so please make that change when you receive the proofs.

The publisher also requests that proofs are checked and returned within 48 hours of receipt.

Thank you for your contribution to Pastoral Care in Education and we look forward to receiving further submissions from you.

Yours sincerely,
Prof Noel Purdy
Editor, Pastoral Care in Education n.purdy@stran.ac.uk

08/05/2023, 11:54

<https://outlook.office.com/mail/id/AAQkADRhZjY4ODM5LTQyNWU...DRiOS1hNDdjLWI1YmFkOGQ4MzQ4YQAQAHoKwGjSSpFlivq5pBnpkH8%3D>

Page 1 of 1

Decision Letter (RPED-2022-0042)

From: n.purdy@stran.ac.uk

To: rebecca.kirkbride@roehampton.ac.uk

CC:

Subject: Pastoral Care in Education - Decision on Manuscript ID RPED-2022-0042

Body: 18-Oct-2022

Dear Ms Kirkbride:

Your manuscript entitled ""Renegades, Outsiders and Lone Warriors": A qualitative study exploring perceptions of professional identity among counsellors working with children and young people." which you submitted to Pastoral Care in Education, has been reviewed. The reviewer comments are included at the bottom of this letter.

The reviewer(s) would like to see some revisions made to your manuscript before publication. Therefore, I invite you to respond to the reviewer(s)' comments and revise your manuscript.

When you revise your manuscript please highlight the changes you make in the manuscript by using the track changes mode in MS Word or by using bold or coloured text.

To submit the revision, log into <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/rped> and enter your Author Centre, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision. Please enter your responses to the comments made by the reviewer(s) in the space provided. You can use this space to document any changes you made to the original manuscript. Please be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewer(s).

Alternatively, once you have revised your paper, it can be resubmitted to Pastoral Care in Education by way of the following link:

*** PLEASE NOTE: This is a two-step process. After clicking on the link, you will be directed to a webpage to confirm. ***

https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/rped?URL_MASK=2cc46a0158ae4c9da7be5cfefc9a36d

IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

Because we are trying to facilitate timely publication of manuscripts submitted

to Pastoral Care in Education, your revised manuscript should be uploaded as soon as possible. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision in a reasonable amount of time, we may have to consider your paper as a new submission.

Once again, thank you for submitting your manuscript to Pastoral Care in Education and I look forward to receiving your revision.

Sincerely,
Dr Noel Purdy
Editor, Pastoral Care in Education
n.purdy@stran.ac.uk

Referee(s)' Comments to Author:

Referee: 1

Comments to the Author

Review of RPED-2022-0042 'Renegades, outsiders, and lone warriors' a qualitative study exploring perceptions of professional identity among counsellors working with children and young people'.

1. Originality, relevance and focus

The draft submission is original, timely and well aligned to the agenda of the journal and focus examines an under-researched area. The 'landscape' of school counselling is a complex one and its effectiveness hinges on team-working by a variety of professionals. This assumes a comfortable alignment of these different professionals to work towards a shared understanding of objectives and outcomes. To question this therefore, in terms of potentially conflicting professional agendas and discourses is a viable line of enquiry, particularly when 'professional identity' is used as a mechanism to reveal the positionality of the professionals concerned.

Whilst I think that the draft article communicates the above aim, I think this becomes blurred by attaching a secondary aim i.e. the influence of regulation, standards and competences. The problem with stating this as an additional aim, is that it runs the risk of taking away from the main question and suggests to me that there could be two papers in the submission that need separating. My suggestion would be to keep the examination of professional identity as the singular aim – the developments relating to regulation, policy, competences are of course relevant, but could be confined to their influence on evolving professional identity.

2. Structure, coherence and balance:

The balance of words in the various sections through the draft article feels about right, however the level of detail and clarity with which it is communicated needs attention to produce a more coherent commentary, examples are:

- The abstract begins with statements about regulatory changes in the field but given your aim, perhaps professional identity should be foregrounded?
- I found the results section difficult to navigate. Although you make reference to master themes and sub themes in the abstract, there is no overview of your analysis at the outset of this section. Also, the commentary jumps without warning from one theme to another. The use of linking sentences between sub-themes to guide the reader would produce greater clarity. Some of your commentary in this section is borderline interpretation (as opposed to presentation of data), so there is scope for editing this if the word count begins to exceed the budget for this section.

- As a reader I think that the final section of the discussion section needs more honing to the findings.

3. Context-setting and use of literature:

Given that PCiE is an international journal, there are things that need spelling out when you discuss the context for international readers who do not have insider knowledge of the cultural and governmental positioning in this context e.g.

- the historical role of school counselling within a wider system of pastoral care for cyp in schools in the UK
 - differences in organisational approaches that may affect the provision of school counselling in the different countries that comprise the UK,
- The driver for the context-setting section is developments in professional regulation. Whilst I can appreciate that for practitioners in the field this is very significant, as a reader I wondered if this deflects from a more fundamental question i.e. what are the components of a 'professional identity' and how do these form? In this instance, regulatory influences are potent but may be not the whole story? A model or conceptual definition of professional identity could provide a helpful anchor to refer back to when discussing the findings.

4. Research design and presentation of data:

- I think this section would benefit from some expanding to include:
 - An earlier reference to your researcher positioning – at the moment, the statement relating to your researcher positioning is articulated too late at end of the draft in the strengths and limitations section. It seems like an afterthought whereas actually, it's central to the analysis. Can you be more explicit about your positioning – are you a person-centred practitioner? Despite your attempts to bracket, how might your subjectivity have leaked into the findings? It would be interesting to read some reflection on this in the strengths and limitations section
 - I would suggest you delete references to MMU and instead use a more neutral phrase e.g. a UK university
 - Can you say something about participants and their practice modalities?
 - Please see my earlier comments about the findings section needing adjustments to produce a more coherent commentary.

5. Quality of discussion:

This needs to be linked more explicitly to the findings. As a reader I was very curious about how counsellors see themselves and what needs to happen for them to be part of a multi-disciplinary team rather than an outsider or anarchist? For example, in the final section it would be helpful to know what all parties need to do to move in towards each other (rather than another discussion of regulation, which feels tangential). Perhaps there is scope for speculating on how the conflicting discourses that fuel the stereotypes of neo-liberal educationalists versus renegade counsellors, could be challenged?

6. Overall clarity of expression:

In the first paragraph of the introduction. articulate the full phrase 'children and young people' followed by the abbreviation 'cyp' in brackets, before then using this abbreviation in the rest of the commentary

On p4, given the references to person-centred theory elsewhere in the commentary, 'treatment' seems an odd word to use – might 'response' be a

better?

7. Presentation: the references at the end of the draft need a thorough proof-read to:

- To include missing details e.g. place of publication in references for books

Referee: 2

Comments to the Author

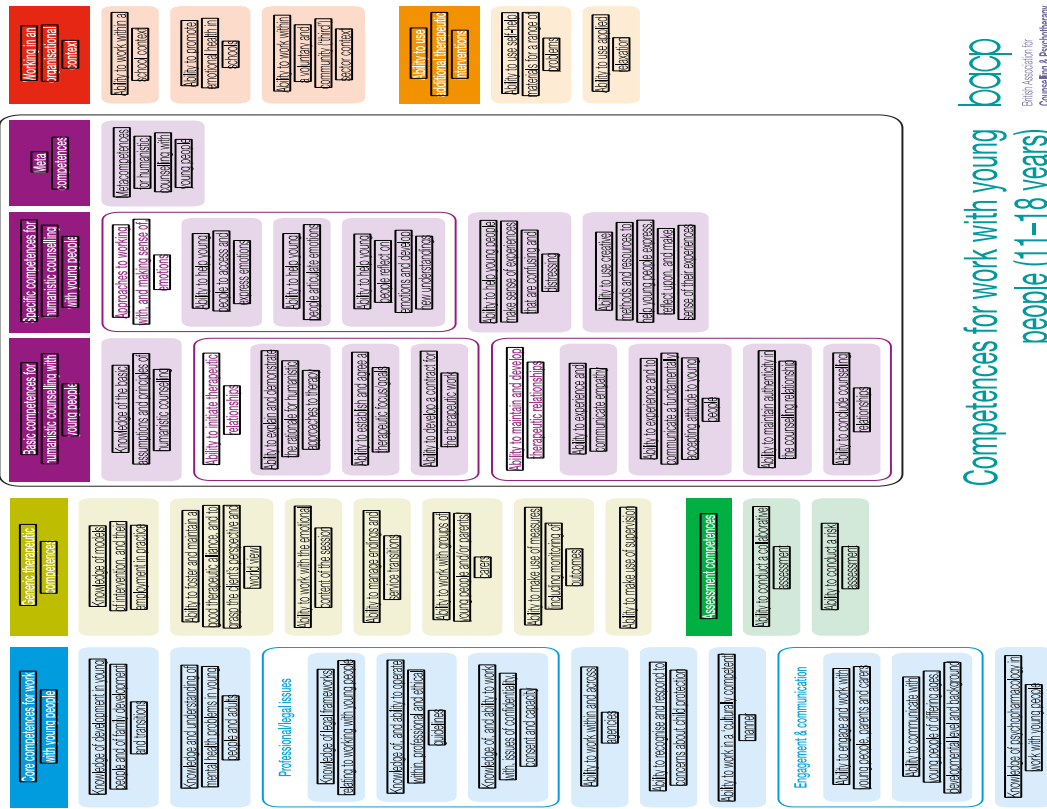
This is a useful and potentially important paper that explores a limited but significant data set. I felt that certain key points were under discussed or developed eg what do we mean by professional - a fuller look at the literature would be useful. the role of the counsellor working with young people and the way that role is conceived is also worth deeper examination. There is in the history of counselling of young people different, useful and challenging conceptions of working within and with institutions as well as individuals e.g Douglas Hamblin's work is seminal. worth adding a bit more depth to strengthen an important debate.

Date Sent: 18-Oct-2022

 Close Window

Appendix II.iv BACP (2014) Map of YP Competences

Ability to offer a therapeutic relationship that facilitates experiential exploration within a relational context



Competences for work with young people (11–18 years)



British Association for
Counselling & Psychotherapy

