Introduction to
Online and Telephone Counselling

2.2 Agency considerations

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Aims and Objectives

Aim: To identify what support agencies are offering students who are counselling online

Objectives:
- To assess if agencies have specific polices for online working.

- Identify if agencies have specific GDPR polices for online working.

- To Identify if specific risk assessment are in place regarding face to face working.

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Managing risk

Agencies responsibilities;

- Do students have the contact details of their clients in case of emergency?

- Are agencies assessing clients for suitability for novice therapists?

- How are practice managers keeping in contact with students?

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Supporting Students

Specific policies

Do the agency have specific policies for-

- Out of hours contact if a client contacts a student in distress?
- Do the agency supply phones to students specifically to contact clients?
- Supplying details of referral pathways?

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Ethical considerations

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Agencies should be able to inform students about their responsibilities under GDPR.

In cases where students would be storing client data on their own devices, such as contracts, addresses, phone numbers etc.

The student becomes a data handler under GDPR and would need specific guidance from the agencies data controller as to how and what data to store and it's disposal.
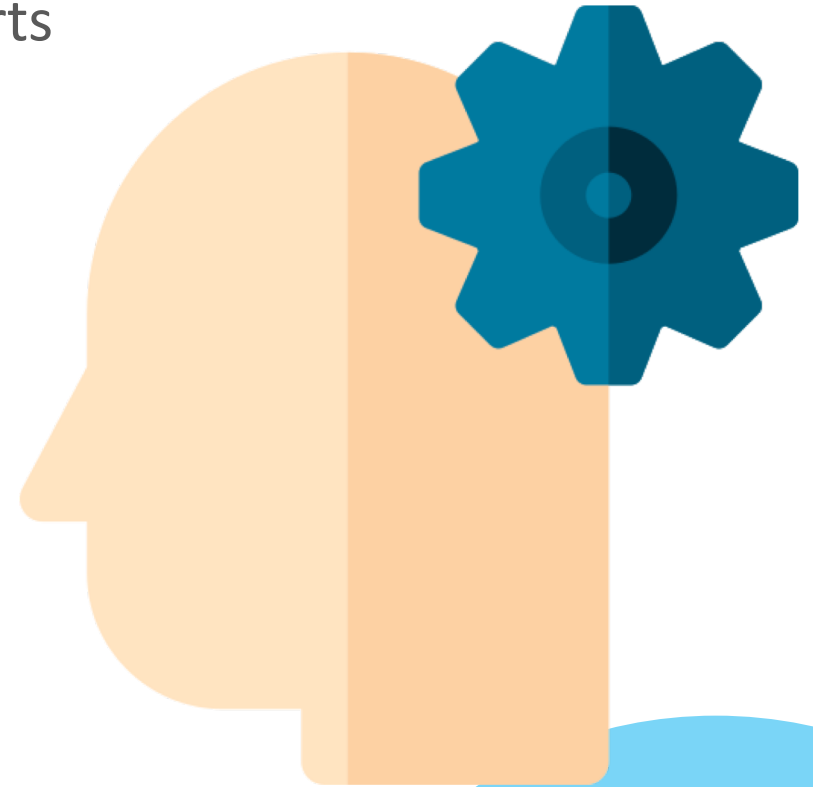
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Preparing Students for Counselling Practice

Placement and supervision audit

Online practice requires Agency supervision that supports students working remotely or in a blended economy.

Tutors may wish to consider:

- Contacting existing Agencies to enquire whether key staff have undertaken online and telephone training.

- Establishing whether Agencies who are working face-to-face with students have a COVID-19 risk assessment in place.

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Preparing Students for Counselling Practice

Health and Safety

Safety and reporting protocols

Tutors may wish to consider:

- Establishing whether agencies who are offering face-to-face counselling have a COVID-19 risk assessment in place

- You may wish to liaise with you H+S department for clarification.

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Plenary

Confer with Colleagues on the Following:

- Consider how agencies manage specific risk,

- What health and safety policies need to be considered for student welfare?

- Enquire if agencies are aware of GDPR considerations for students working remotely.

- What H+S procedures are agencies putting in to place for face to face supervision.

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Useful references and links :

Ico.org.uk. 2020. *What Are 'Controllers' And 'Processors'?*. [online] Available at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/controllers-and-processors/what-are-controllers-and-processors/> [Accessed 29 September 2020].