PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

JANUARY-APRIL 2026 TRIMESTER

CAMPUS: ROYSAMBU

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COURSE CODE: CDC116

COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

EXAM DATE:

DURATION: 3 HOURS

TIME: 6.00PM-9:00PM (PHYSICAL)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Read the instructions and questions carefully before you write the answers.
- **Answer any THREE questions**
- *ALL PAC University's examination rules and regulations apply*

QUESTION 1 (20 Marks)

Case Study:
Maria, a 19-year-old university student, reports difficulty concentrating in class, increased anxiety before exams, conflict with her parents, and

disrupted sleep. She also mentions feeling spiritually disconnected and questioning her life purpose.
a). Using the major classifications of psychology, discuss how **five** *different branches* of psychology would conceptualize Maria's concerns (10Marks).

b). Case Study:
A client reports feeling unheard and judged during counseling sessions and stops attending therapy. Using your understanding of the **characteristics of an effective counselor**, explain **five** qualities that may have been lacking in this situation (10 Marks).

QUESTION 2 (20 Marks)

a). Daniel, a 22-year-old student, experiences severe anxiety when speaking in class and often avoids presentations.
Using the **Humanistic model**, explain **five** ways his avoidance and anxiety could have developed and been maintained (10Marks).

b). Justify five ways how building rapport in the intake stage influence the overall success of counseling (10Marks).

QUESTION 3 (20 Marks)

a). A client you have been seeing brings you a $50 gift card at the end of the year to say "thank you."
Justify **five** ethical reasons why you should decline this offer (10 Marks).

b). You are reviewing a colleague's case file and notice the notes are disorganized.
Explain any **five** specific reasons why using the SOAP format is essential for both Ethical and Legal protection (10 Marks).

QUESTION 4 (20 marks)

a) Analyze **five** points on how Christian and secular counseling would differ in their intervention strategies for clients with similar anxiety symptoms (10Marks).
b) c). Discuss **five** points on how debriefing contributes to professional competence and emotional regulation (10 Marks).

END

MARKING SCHEME (PHYSICAL) CDC116 INTRODUCTION TO COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION

January-April 2026

CDC 116: INTRODUCTION TO COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

MARKING SCHEME (PHYSICAL)

QUESTION 1 (20MARKS)

Case Study:
Maria, a 19-year-old university student, reports difficulty concentrating in class, increased anxiety before exams, conflict with her parents, and disrupted sleep. She also mentions feeling spiritually disconnected and questioning her life purpose.

a). Using the major classifications of psychology, discuss how **five** *different branches* of psychology would conceptualize Maria's concerns (10Marks).

1. Clinical Psychology
Her concentration difficulties and sleep disruption may be symptoms of anxiety or mood disturbance. Spiritual disconnection could reflect existential distress linked to depressive features.

2. Developmental Psychology

At 19, Maria is in late adolescence/early adulthood, a period characterized by identity exploration and autonomy development.

- *Conflict with parents may reflect individuation struggles.*
- *Spiritual questioning aligns with identity formation.*
- *Academic stress is common during transition to adulthood.*

3. Cognitive Psychology

- *Exam anxiety may stem from maladaptive cognitions (e.g., "If I fail, I am worthless").*
- *Concentration difficulties may result from worry loops and attentional bias toward threat.*
- *Spiritual disconnection may reflect negative core beliefs about meaning and purpose.*

4. Social Psychology

A social psychologist would explore how Maria's environment affects her wellbeing.

- *Parental conflict may influence self-esteem and stress levels.*
- *Peer comparison in university may increase performance anxiety.*
- *Social expectations (family, culture, religion) may contribute to spiritual disconnection.*

5. Biological Psychology

A biological psychologist would consider physiological contributors.

- *Sleep disruption may dysregulate cortisol and increase anxiety.*
- *Neurochemical imbalances (e.g., serotonin, GABA) may contribute to mood and anxiety symptoms.*
- *Genetic predisposition to anxiety disorders may be explored.*

Any 5 points (1mark) linked to characteristics of an effective

counselor (1mark)= 10 marks

b). A client reports feeling unheard and judged during counseling sessions and stops attending therapy.

Using your understanding of the **characteristics of an effective counselor**, explain **five** qualities that may have been lacking in this situation (10 Marks).

1. ***Empathy***
   An effective counselor demonstrates the ability to genuinely understand and feel the client's emotional experience. If the counselor failed to convey empathy, the client may have felt emotionally disconnected, misunderstood, or invalidated.
2. ***Active Listening***
   Active listening involves giving full attention, reflecting feelings and content, and responding thoughtfully. A lack of this skill can make clients feel ignored or rushed, leading them to believe their concerns are not important.

3. ***Non-judgmental Attitude (Unconditional Positive Regard)***
   Counselors must accept clients without criticism or moral judgment. If the counselor expressed disapproval—verbally or through body language—the client may have felt judged and unsafe to share openly.
4. ***Respect and Validation***
   Effective counselors respect clients' perspectives and validate their experiences, even when they do not agree with them. Without validation, clients may feel dismissed or minimized, which can weaken the therapeutic alliance.
5. ***Effective Communication Skills***
   Clear, supportive, and appropriate communication helps build trust. Poor communication—such as interrupting, using overly directive language, or failing to check for understanding—can leave ***Patience***
   Counseling requires allowing clients to express themselves at their own pace without rushing or pushing them to "move on" too quickly. A lack of patience can make clients feel pressured or that their feelings aren't being fully heard, contributing to disengagement from therapy.
6. ***Cultural Competence and Sensitivity***
   Effective counselors are aware of and respect cultural, social, and personal differences. If a counselor fails to acknowledge or honor the client's background, values, or experiences, the client may feel misunderstood, judged, or marginalized.

Any 5 points (1mark) linked to classifications of psychology (1mark) =

10 marks

QUESTION 2 (20MARKS)

a). Daniel, a 22-year-old student, experiences severe anxiety when speaking in class and often avoids presentations.
Using the **Humanistic model**, explain **five** ways his avoidance and anxiety could have developed and been maintained.

1. Incongruence Between Self-Concept and Experience

- *Daniel may have an ideal self-image of being competent and confident.*
- *His past embarrassment in class conflicts with this ideal self, creating anxiety and avoidance*

2. Conditional Positive Regard in Early Life

- *If Daniel experienced criticism or conditional acceptance from parents or teachers, he may have learned that approval depends on "perfect" performance.*
- *This can make him fear judgment in public speaking.*

3. Lack of Unconditional Positive Regard

- *Daniel may not have felt accepted unconditionally, leading to self-doubt.*

- *The humanistic perspective emphasizes the need for supportive environments to develop self-worth.*
- *Anxiety is maintained because he constantly evaluates himself against perceived external expectations.*

4. Blocked Personal Growth / Self-Actualization

- *Avoiding presentations prevents Daniel from developing confidence, social skills, and mastery.*
- *The Humanistic model sees avoidance as a barrier to self-actualization.*

5. Focus on Internal Experience / Feelings

- *Daniel may be highly aware of his fear, bodily sensations, and embarrassment.*
- *Over-focusing on these internal experiences can amplify anxiety and avoidance.*

6. Limited Coping Strategies / Lack of Personal Agency

- *Daniel may not have been encouraged to explore solutions or assert his capabilities in challenging situations.*
- *Avoidance provides temporary relief but reinforces a belief that he cannot cope.*

Any 5 points (1mark) linked to Humanistic model (1mark)= 10 marks

b). Justify **five** ways how building rapport in the intake stage influence the overall success of counseling (10 Marks).

1.Establishes Trust

- *Clients are more likely to share personal and sensitive information when they feel safe and respected.*

- *Trust reduces resistance and defensiveness, allowing for accurate assessment of issues.*

2.Encourages Open Communication

- *Good rapport fosters honesty and transparency.*
- *Clients feel comfortable discussing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors critical for effective intervention.*

3. ***Enhances Client Engagement***

- *Clients are more motivated to participate actively in sessions when they feel understood and supported.*
- *Active engagement is linked to better therapeutic outcomes.*

4. ***Reduces Anxiety and Apprehension***

- *The intake stage can be intimidating; rapport helps clients feel calm and less fearful.*
- *Lower anxiety enables clearer thinking and facilitates meaningful dialogue.*

5. ***Improves Assessment Accuracy***

- *When clients trust the counselor, they provide more accurate histories, presenting concerns, and contextual information.*
- *Accurate assessment allows for better-informed treatment planning.*

6. ***Lays the Foundation for Therapeutic Alliance***

- *Early rapport contributes to a strong therapeutic relationship, which is a consistent predictor of counseling success across models.*
- *A positive alliance supports collaboration, goal-setting, and adherence to interventions.*

b). You are reviewing a colleague's case file and notice the notes are disorganized.
Explain any **five** specific reasons why using the SOAP format is essential for both Ethical and Legal protection **(10 Marks).**

1. ***Clarity and Organization of Records***
   SOAP provides a structured and consistent format, making case notes clear, logical, and easy to follow. Well-organized records demonstrate professionalism and ethical responsibility in documentation.
2. ***Accurate Representation of Client Information***
   Separating subjective client reports from objective observations reduces misinterpretation. This accuracy is critical in legal settings where records may be scrutinized.
3. ***Continuity of Care***
   Clear SOAP notes allow other professionals or supervisors to understand the client's progress and treatment rationale, supporting ethical responsibility for quality and consistent care.
4. ***Evidence of Clinical Reasoning***
   The assessment section shows how clinical judgments were formed. This transparency protects the counselor legally by demonstrating informed, professional decision-making.
5. ***Clear Treatment Planning and Accountability***
   The plan section documents goals, interventions, and follow-up actions, showing that treatment is intentional, ethical, and aligned with professional standards.
6. ***Legal Defensibility***
   In the event of complaints, audits, or court cases, SOAP notes provide structured, factual documentation that can serve as credible legal evidence of appropriate care.
7. ***Compliance with Ethical Codes and Regulations***
   Most professional bodies require accurate, timely, and organized record-

keeping. Using SOAP helps counselors meet ethical and legal documentation requirements, reducing the risk of professional misconduct claims.

Any 5 points (1mark) linked to SOAP (1 mark)= 10 marks

c). Discuss **five** points on how debriefing contributes to professional competence and emotional regulation (10Marks).

1. Reduces Emotional Residue

- *Counsellors often absorb strong client emotions such as grief, anger, trauma, or hopelessness. Debriefing allows these emotions to be processed rather than suppressed.*

2. Prevents Burnout and Vicarious Trauma

Repeated exposure to traumatic material can lead to secondary traumatic stress. Debriefing:

- *Normalizes emotional reactions*
- *Identifies early signs of burnout*
- *Encourages preventative self-care strategies*

3. Enhances Self-Awareness

Debriefing promotes reflection on:

- *Personal triggers*
- *Countertransference*
- *Biases and assumptions*

4. Strengthens Clinical Judgment

counsellors:

- *Review interventions used*
- *Evaluate what was effective or ineffective*
- *Consider alternative approaches*

5. Improves Emotional Regulation Skills

- *Cognitive reframing*
- *Grounding techniques*
- *Perspective-taking*

6. Supports Ethical Practice

Debriefing creates space to examine:

- *Boundary concerns*
- *Dual relationships*
- *Confidentiality dilemmas*
- *Risk management decisions*

7. Promotes Professional Growth and Resilience

Debriefing turns difficult experiences into learning opportunities. It:

- *Encourages reflective practice*
- *Builds confidence*
- *Reinforces professional identity*
- *Cultivates resilience under stress*

Any 5 points (1mark) linked to debriefing (1mark)= 10 marks

QUESTION 4

a) c). A client you have been seeing brings you a $50 gift card at the end of the year to say 'Thank you'.

Justify any **five** ethical reasons why you should decline this offer **(10 Marks).**

1. ***Dual Relationship***
   Accepting the offer would create a dual relationship, where the client becomes both a client and a service provider. This can blur professional boundaries and interfere with the objectivity and effectiveness of counseling.
2. ***Power Imbalance and Exploitation***
   The counseling relationship involves an inherent power imbalance. Even though the offer is "free," the client may feel obligated to give something in return for therapy, which could be exploitative or appear as such.
3. ***Risk to Professional Boundaries***
   Accepting personal favors can weaken professional boundaries, making it harder to maintain a clear therapeutic role and potentially leading to further inappropriate requests.
4. ***Impact on the Therapeutic Process***
   The client may begin to focus on pleasing or helping the counselor rather than working on their own therapeutic goals, which can shift the focus away from the client's needs.
5. ***Ethical Codes and Professional Standards***
   Most counseling ethical codes discourage accepting gifts or services that could influence judgment or compromise professional integrity. Declining

the offer helps maintain ethical practice and public trust in the profession.

6. ***Risk of Confidentiality Breach***
   Allowing the client access to your personal financial information could blur boundaries and increase the risk of confidentiality issues or discomfort that may affect the therapeutic relationship.
7. ***Compromised Objectivity and Dependence***
   Accepting the service may make it difficult to remain objective in therapy, especially if issues of gratitude, guilt, or dependence arise. The client may also feel a stronger sense of attachment that interferes with healthy therapeutic progress.

Any 5 points (1mark) linked to ethical reasons (1 mark)= 10 marks

END