

## Qualification Unit

This unit forms part of a regulated qualification.

**Unit Title:** Mental Health Foundations in Outdoor and Adventure Therapy

**Unit Reference Number:** M/651/7998

**Level:** Four (4)

**Credit Value:** Four (4)

**Minimum Guided Learning Hours:** 25

Learning Outcome (The Learner will):	Assessment Criterion (The Learner can):
1. Understand common mental health conditions	1.1 Identify common mental health conditions encountered in Outdoor and Adventure Therapy
	2.1 Describe three common mental health conditions
2. Understand how key symptoms of mental health conditions may impact participation in Outdoor and Adventure Therapy	2.1 Explain how symptoms of mental health conditions may impact participation in outdoor therapy
	2.2 Analyse how outdoor environments can support and challenge clients with mental health conditions
3. Understand the psychological impacts of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	3.1 Define Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
	3.2 Explain the impact adverse childhood experiences can have on an individual's mental health
	3.3 Explain how trauma can affect behaviour in outdoor settings
	3.4 Evaluate the role of Outdoor and Adventure Therapy in supporting trauma recovery
4. Understand the suitability of Outdoor and Adventure Therapy for supporting clients with complex mental health conditions	4.1 Identify risk factors that may indicate Outdoor and Adventure Therapy is unsuitable for an individual
	4.2 Discuss how risk factors could be mitigated

	4.3	Explain the ethical limitations of Outdoor and Adventure Therapy
	4.4	Give three examples of how therapy can be adapted for clients with complex needs
	4.5	Outline how to signpost to appropriate mental health services
5. Understand the principles of trauma-sensitive practice	5.1	Identify key principles of trauma-sensitive practice
	5.2	Explain strategies for creating psychological safety in outdoor therapeutic environments
	5.3	Evaluate one case study for trauma-sensitive practice considerations

Indicative Content	
LO1	<p>Learners <b>must</b> recognise common mental health needs encountered in Outdoor and Adventure Therapy. Learners are not expected to diagnose conditions but can show understanding of typical presentations that may impact participation and engagement.</p> <p>Common mental health conditions can include; anxiety disorders (generalised anxiety, social anxiety, panic), depression and low mood, stress-related difficulties, trauma-related responses (PTSD, hypervigilance, dissociation), emotional dysregulation in children and adults.</p>
LO2	<p><b>AC 2.1</b> Learners <b>must</b> show an understanding of how common mental health symptoms (e.g., anxiety, low mood, trauma responses, emotional dysregulation) can affect a client's ability to engage in outdoor and adventure therapy. This could include how anxiety may cause avoidance of group activities; depression may reduce motivation and energy; trauma symptoms may trigger dissociation or hypervigilance.</p> <p><b>AC 2.2</b> Learners <b>must</b> show an understanding of how outdoor environments can support clients with mental health needs. This could include; can reduce stress, promote emotional regulation, build resilience, and restore cognitive focus through calming sensory input and positive challenge.</p> <p>Learners <b>must</b> show an understanding of how outdoor environments can also challenge clients with mental health needs if not adapted sensitively. This could include sensory overload, physical demands, unpredictability, or group dynamics may trigger anxiety, overwhelm, or emotional dysregulation.</p>
LO3	<p><b>AC 3.1 &amp; 3.2</b> <b>must</b> define what Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are (e.g., abuse, neglect, household dysfunction) and how early adversity impacts mental health (e.g., anxiety, emotional dysregulation, trust issues)</p> <p><b>AC 3.2 &amp; 3.3</b> <b>must</b> explain how early adversity impacts mental health and behaviour, showing an understanding of the link between trauma and nervous system dysregulation, and how outdoor therapy can help.</p>
LO4	<p><b>AC 4.1</b> Learners <b>must</b> identify risk factors that may indicate Outdoor and Adventure Therapy is unsuitable for an individual (e.g., high-risk behaviours, active psychosis, severe emotional dysregulation)</p>

	<p><b>AC 4.2</b> Learners <b>must</b> show understanding of the limit of Outdoor and Adventure Therapy when supporting clients with complex mental health needs and discuss how some risks may be mitigated through careful planning and trauma-sensitive adaptations.</p> <p><b>AC 4.5</b> Learners <b>must</b> outline signposting procedures, including recognising when clients should be referred to specialist mental health services (e.g., NHS mental health teams, crisis services, voluntary sector organisations).</p>
LO5	<p><b>AC 5.1</b> Learners <b>must</b> show understanding of the core principles of trauma-sensitive practice, including creating safety, predictability, empowerment, and offering choice.</p> <p>Learners <b>must</b> explain how to promote psychological safety in outdoor environments through clear communication, gradual exposure to challenge, and adapting to individual needs.</p> <p>Learners <b>must</b> critically evaluate a given case study, identifying examples of good trauma-sensitive practice and areas for improvement, showing understanding of how outdoor therapy can either support or unintentionally challenge trauma recovery.</p>