

Advanced Certificate in Counselling Skills



Course Information



network
counselling and training



NCPS



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Advanced Certificate in Counselling Skills

AWARD

Award Summary

Title of course	Advanced Certificate in Counselling Skills
Providing institution	Network Counselling and Training Ltd
Award	Network Training Certificate
Mode of study	Part-time over one year
Level of study	Equivalent of Higher Education Level 4 (i.e. the equivalent of the first year of a university degree)
Course quality assured by	The National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society

Satisfactory Completion of Core Elements

In order to achieve the award, **students must have satisfactorily passed all the assessed core elements** – i.e., foundational counselling theory, foundational counselling skills and foundational personal development. **Unsatisfactory performance in one element may not be compensated for by the performance in other elements.**

All three core elements are assessed mainly via coursework. In this handbook, you will find detailed information about the coursework to be submitted, including deadlines and assessment criteria. Below is a summary of the coursework which you will be required to complete over the year:

- two theoretical essays
- a counselling skills demonstration and critical evaluation
- a 20-hour supportive listening placement
- a learning journal which must be kept throughout the year, and which includes a personal development profile at the end of the third term
- a short presentation about your counselling skills placement.

Personal Counselling

You are expected to enter personal counselling during the Advanced Certificate course, especially where you have not previously had experience of being counselled.

Network Students cannot receive counselling from Network's Counselling Service due to the potential for conflicts of interest. A directory of private counsellors and counselling organisations is available on Google Classroom for students to refer to if seeking a counsellor.

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

The Network Advanced Certificate Course is a part-time course offering in total around 600 hours of training (including around 250 hours of staff-student contact time).

Course Aims and Objectives

- To enable you to develop a sound working knowledge and understanding of the concepts and principles of an integrative person-centred model of counselling and the ability to evaluate them.
- To enable you to develop your capacity to engage in the process of philosophical/spiritual reflection from the perspective of your own philosophy or spirituality and to begin to integrate your philosophical/spiritual framework with an understanding of the counselling process.
- To enable you to develop the capacity to form and sustain an effective therapeutic relationship.
- To enable you to develop a basic level of competence in a range of foundational counselling skills and to equip you to use these skills safely, competently and ethically in a wide range of roles and settings.
- To facilitate your ongoing personal and professional development and to enable you to develop a basic level of awareness and understanding of yourself.
- To encourage in you a commitment to ongoing self-evaluation, and to enable you to begin to develop the capacity to be a self-reflective practitioner and to evaluate your work critically.

Self-Directed Study

In addition to attendance and participation in teaching sessions and tutorials and completing your supportive listening placement, you will be expected to undertake **a minimum of 350 hours of private study** over the year (an average of 9 hours per week over the three terms). This will involve reading set and recommended texts, completing coursework and maintaining your learning journal. We recognise that you may wish to undertake some of your private study during holidays to 'spread the load'. Reading lists and details of course assignments are available on Google Classroom to allow you a measure of flexibility in planning your programme of study.

The Supportive Listening Placement

In this Certificate year, you will be required to complete a placement of **a minimum of 20 hours of counselling skills practice**. Please note that 20 hours of counselling skills practice is a minimum requirement, and we would strongly encourage you to maintain your commitment to your placement for the duration of the year.

The placement will not take the form of formal supervised counselling practice but will involve the use of the foundational counselling skills in some other kind of role and setting – for example, in your workplace (where appropriate), in the context of a church pastoral care team or in a voluntary support agency. It is your responsibility to find a suitable placement and to provide the Course Tutor with details of the placement and of the nature of the work you will be doing.

There is an introductory letter from the course, available on Google Classroom, which you can give to the organisation you approach. This will give the organisation information about the course and the placement requirements and outline what you will be able to offer them.

You may begin your placement at any time after the start of the Autumn Term. During your placement, you must be accountable to a line manager in the setting in which you work – they must be fully informed of the work you are doing and must agree to countersign your placement log – a record of your practice during the placement.

The course will not provide any supervision of the work you do while on placement and there is no expectation on Network's part that you should receive supervision in the context in which you are working. You will, however, have the opportunity to address any issues or concerns arising out of your work on placement with your personal tutor over the year.

Your placement must regularly give you the opportunity to work with individual 'clients' for a reasonable length of time - i.e., preferably for at least 15 – 20 minutes on average – although we recognise that not every encounter with a 'client' will necessarily be of that duration. It is not necessary, however, to work with the same 'client' more than once. Each session at your placement must be logged on the placement log sheets provided on Google Classroom.

As mentioned above, it is your responsibility to find a suitable placement. This should be in place **by the start of the Autumn Term and not later than the end of October**. If you have been unsuccessful in securing a placement you should speak to your personal tutor before the Autumn Half Term.

Examples of Suitable Placements:

Social work/occupational therapy	Health visiting/community psychiatric nursing
General nursing/teaching (where this involves a supportive listening role)	Pastoral care visiting
Prayer ministry (where this includes the use of counselling skills as outlined above)	Support work
Supportive listening work	Telephone support work (e.g., Samaritans/Mind helpline)
Hospital/hospice visiting	Mentoring
Youth work	Community Cafe
Befriending	Care home/nursing home visiting

COURSE CURRICULUM

The structure and content of the Advanced Certificate course comprises three core elements which are closely interlinked, and which are taught concurrently throughout each term. To achieve the award, you are required to pass all three elements satisfactorily. Each element is intended to involve you in approximately 200 hours of effort over the year, consisting of a varying amount of contact with staff and private study. Each has its own approved aims and learning outcomes, content, teaching methods and assessment procedures. A full description of each of these elements can be found below, along with a map of the course curriculum (see pages 12-14).

The Spiritual Dimension of the Course

Rather than standing on its own as a separate element, the spiritual dimension of the course is woven into each of three core elements. For example, in studying the core theoretical model, we will look at the assumptions the model makes about human spirituality and will seek to resource you in beginning to integrate your own philosophical/spiritual framework with the theoretical ideas you are encountering. As part of the skills training, we will explore how to work effectively with the spiritual dimension of people's experience and to draw on spiritual resources sensitively and ethically in the context of a counselling relationship. Similarly, as part of the personal development work, we will be inviting you to explore your own developing spirituality and to consider its impact on your practice.

ELEMENT 1: FOUNDATIONAL COUNSELLING THEORY

Teaching and Learning:

The majority of the theory teaching will take place in weekly theoretical seminars lasting 1.5 hours.

Total Study Time: 200 hours.

Scheduled Learning and Teaching Activities: 30% - 60 hours.

Short teaching sessions, seminars, discussion groups, case studies, self-reflective exercises, tutorials.

Guided Independent Study: 70% - 140 hours (both directed and self-directed).

Wider reading and research; coursework.

Assessment Items

Two 3000-word essays – one due towards the end of each of the first two terms.

Element Aims

- To enable you to develop a sound working knowledge and understanding of the core assumptions, concepts and principles of an integrative person-centred model of counselling.
- To enable you to develop a sound understanding of the counselling process and of the way in which it brings about change.
- To enable you to develop your capacity to engage in the process of philosophical/spiritual reflection from the perspective of your own faith or spirituality and to begin to integrate your spiritual framework with an understanding of counselling theory.

Content

The core theoretical model is an integrative person-centred model, known as the Core Self model, which was especially developed for this course by Kaitlyn Steele. It is fundamentally person-centred in that it

draws heavily on the work of Carl Rogers and other person-centred writers, and shares with its humanistic counterpart many of the philosophical assumptions and theoretical hypotheses that shape person-centred theory and practice. It is also person-centred in that it rests firmly on the belief that 'the relationship is the therapy' (Mearns & Thorne 2013). In other words, that it is the quality of the relationship between counsellor and client that lies at the heart of the effectiveness of the counselling process.

Over the year, you will study the Core Self Model in some depth, exploring its philosophical and theoretical framework and key concepts and beginning to learn to apply the model in reaching an understanding of specific presenting problems such as depression. You will also learn about the process of spiritual/theological reflection and be encouraged to reflect on the theoretical ideas and concepts you are encountering from a spiritual perspective.

The syllabus will cover the following key areas:

- Person -Centred Theory
- Aspects of Human Nature
- The Core Self model (an integrative person-centred model) - its philosophical/ theoretical framework and key concepts
- The nature of the counselling process and how it facilitates psychological/ spiritual development
- The belief system
- Applying the Core Self Model in working with specific presenting problems
- Ethics
- Boundaries
- Confidentiality
- Resistance
- Transference
- Anger, Forgiveness, Guilt and Shame
- Depression
- Attachment
- Grief and loss
- Trauma
- Sex and sexuality
- Working within Diversity
- The process of philosophical/spiritual reflection and its relevance for counselling practice

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the element, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate and apply a sound working knowledge and understanding of the key philosophical and theoretical assumptions and theoretical concepts of the Core Self Model.
2. Demonstrate a sound understanding of the counselling process and of how it facilitates psychological/spiritual development.
3. Demonstrate a developing capacity to analyse and evaluate theoretical hypotheses and concepts.
4. Demonstrate the capacity to link theoretical ideas to personal and practical experience.

Indicative Learning Resources

Note that the main source of information on the Core Self Model will be found in the course notes available on Google Classroom.

ELEMENT 2: FOUNDATIONAL COUNSELLING SKILLS

Teaching and Learning

The skills teaching sessions will take place in the large group whilst the majority of the skills training will take place in small skills practice groups of up to five students which will meet for 2.75 hours over two/ three sessions. Wherever possible, there will be one facilitator per group. The small groups will change from week to week. A weekly rota will be posted on Google Classroom.

Total study time: 200 hours.

Scheduled Learning and Teaching Activities: 55% - 110 hours.

Short teaching sessions; practical counselling skills exercises; audio visual recording of practice sessions; training DVDs; skills demonstrations.

Guided Independent Study: 45% - 90 hours (both directed and self-directed).

Additional skills practice; reflective work; counselling skills placement; wider reading; coursework.

Assessment Items

An audio-visual recording of a 25-minute counselling session, accompanied by a critical evaluation. Due in the final term of the year.

Element Aims

- To introduce you to a stage model of the counselling process.
- To develop your ability to form and sustain a therapeutic relationship and to communicate the core conditions of unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence.
- To enable you to identify and practice the foundational counselling skills necessary for competence in the core theoretical model.
- To develop your ability to reflect critically on your practice.
- To train you to use spiritual resources in a sensitive, appropriate and disciplined way within the context of a counselling relationship.

Content

During this element, you will study, in depth, a three-stage model of the counselling process adapted from the work of Culley and Bond (2011). The model also draws on the work of Janet Tolan (2016) and there is a primary emphasis throughout on the development of the core therapeutic qualities of unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence and of a range of foundational counselling skills necessary for competence in the core theoretical model. In addition, you will explore ways in which you might work with spiritual issues within the context of the counselling relationship.

The syllabus will cover the following key areas:

- A three-stage model of the counselling process
- Initial structuring
- Attending skills
- Reflective and probing skills.
- Challenging skills – advanced empathy, supportive challenge, here-and-now immediacy
- Working with spiritual issues
- Understanding process

- Holding boundaries
- Recognising and working with resistance
- Recognising and working with transference
- Working with emotional pain

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the element, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a sound understanding of a three-stage model of the counselling process.
2. Demonstrate the ability to manage a counselling session effectively.
3. Demonstrate the ability to form a therapeutic relationship and to communicate the core therapeutic qualities of unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence.
4. Use a range of the foundational counselling skills competently and ethically in a counselling session.
5. Demonstrate the ability to reflect critically on the handling of a counselling session and to discriminate between helpful and unhelpful counselling interventions.
6. Demonstrate a degree of awareness and understanding of process.

ELEMENT 3: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teaching and Learning

The majority of the personal development work will take place in small personal development groups of up to nine students led by a facilitator. You will remain in the same group throughout the year. Taking into account additional workshops, the course provides approximately 65 hours of personal development work (excluding private study and coursework) over the year.

Total Study Time: 200 hours.

Scheduled Learning and Teaching Activities: 33% - 65 hours.

Large group work structured and unstructured personal development group work, self-awareness and experiential exercises, tutorials.

Guided Independent Study: 67% - 135 hours (both directed and self-directed).

Reflective work, wider reading, coursework (including journaling).

Assessment Items

A 3,000-word personal development profile. Due in the final term of the academic year.

Element Aims

- To develop your awareness, understanding and acceptance of yourself.
- To enable you to identify and explore your own unique value, attitude and belief system.
- To enable you to identify and explore your interpersonal style and the balance of your personal and interpersonal strengths and areas for development.
- To enable you to develop a knowledge and understanding of your needs, fears, vulnerabilities and personal 'blind spots'.

Content

While it is recognised that personal development may take place in the context of many different elements of the course such as skills work, theoretical study and feedback opportunities, the course also makes explicit provision for personal development both through work in personal development groups (small groups which meet for 1.25 hours weekly throughout the course), through large group work (where the whole student group meets for 30 minutes weekly throughout the course), the tutorial system and through other focused activities such as the learning journal.

The element will provide opportunities for you to explore your own personal attitudes, beliefs and values, your interpersonal skills and style, your strengths, 'growing edges', and vulnerabilities. It will also help you to relate the theoretical ideas and concepts you will encounter to your own personal development and to explore what is happening within yourself and in your relationships with others as a result of the process of counselling training.

The syllabus will cover the following key areas:

- Understanding personal development
- The importance/development of self-awareness
- The development of self-acceptance
- Exploring own interpersonal skills/style
- Exploring own belief and value systems
- Exploring aspects of self
- Dealing with own emotional pain
- Exploring own defence mechanisms and self-protective strategies
- Exploring own transference
- Developing awareness of vulnerabilities and 'blind spots'
- Recognising and accepting needs; looking after self

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Provide evidence of personal growth and development (including spiritual growth) over the year.
2. Provide evidence of an adequate degree of personal soundness - i.e., an adequate self-reflective capacity (awareness and understanding of self); a high degree of personal integrity; the absence of major intra- or inter-personal difficulties which might inhibit the ability to work safely and competently with clients.
3. Demonstrate an adequate degree of awareness, understanding, acceptance of self and others.
4. Demonstrate an adequate degree of awareness of own personal values, attitudes and beliefs.
5. Demonstrate an adequate degree of awareness of personal and interpersonal strengths, and of how these might impact on practice.
6. Demonstrate an adequate degree of awareness and understanding of personal and interpersonal areas for development, and of how these might impact on practice.

Overall Course Assessment Criteria

The central aim of the Advanced Certificate course is to enable you to develop the ability to create and sustain an effective therapeutic relationship and to function safely, competently and effectively. At advanced certificate level, this will involve the use of counselling skills in the context of other helping relationships rather than any formal engagement in the process of counselling. The ability to offer a therapeutic relationship and to work safely, competently and effectively is dependent to a large extent on three core qualities: adequate knowledge and understanding of counselling theory; competence in the use of counselling skills; an adequate degree of personal soundness. Consequently, there are three core assessment criteria which must be met by all students in order to meet the course requirements and to achieve the award:

Core Criteria

- Evidence of adequate knowledge and understanding of counselling theory and the ability to apply this to counselling practice.
- Evidence of competent use of the foundational counselling skills.
- Evidence of an adequate degree of personal soundness - i.e. an adequate self-reflective capacity (awareness and understanding of self); a high degree of personal integrity; the absence of major intra- or inter-personal difficulties which might inhibit the ability to work safely and competently with clients.

Core Texts

The course has four core texts which are required reading and, while there are multiple copies of these in the course library, it is strongly recommended that you buy your own copy:

Counselling theory

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Mearns, D & Thorne, B (2013) | <u>Person-Centred Counselling in Action</u> 4 th edition Sage. |
| Steele, K (2014) | <u>Sacred Space</u> Create Space |

Counselling skills

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Tolan, J & Cameron, R (2016) | <u>Skills in Person-Centred Counselling and Psychotherapy</u> 3 rd edition Sage |
|------------------------------|--|

Personal development

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Rose, C (2018) | <u>The Personal Development Group: The Students' Guide</u> Routledge |
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MAP OF THE COURSE CURRICULUM

TERM 1

Element 1: Foundational Counselling Theory

- Definitions/origins of counselling
- Embracing the spiritual dimension in counselling
- Core model: core philosophical/theoretical assumptions and values
- Aspects of self: the emotional, cognitive, volitional and relational dimensions
- Healing emotional wounds
- An image of the fully functioning person
- The therapeutic relationship
- The core conditions hypothesis
- The self-concept

Element 2: Foundational Counselling Skills

- The Beginning Stage (Stage 1)
- Stage 1 skills:
 - attending skills; being present
 - initial structuring
 - reflective skills
 - probing skills

Element 3: Personal Development

- Understanding personal development
- The importance/development of self-awareness
- The development of self-acceptance
- Exploring my beliefs about self
- Myself as an emotional/rational/relational being
- Recognising and accepting needs; looking after self

Assessment Item: one 3,000-word theoretical essay

TERM 2

Element 1: Foundational Counselling Theory

An introduction to the belief system: beliefs about self

The belief system: beliefs about others, the world and the transcendent; the concept of life strategies

Maintenance of psychological problems

The process of reassessment

Understanding stuckness/resistance

Understanding transference

Understanding ethics

Understanding confidentiality

Understanding boundaries

Element 2: Foundational Counselling Skills

The Middle Stage (Stage 2)

Stage 2 skills:

Advanced Empathy

Supportive Challenge

Maintaining confidentiality

Working with resistance

Working with transference

Holding boundaries

Element 3: Personal Development

Exploring my styles of communication

Exploring interpersonal skills/style

Exploring my beliefs about others/the world/the transcendent

Exploring my own defence mechanisms

Assessment Item: one 3,000-word theoretical essay

TERM 3

Element 1: Foundational Counselling Theory

- Understanding anger.
- Understanding forgiveness
- Understanding shame and guilt
- Aspects of self: sexuality and spirituality
- Understanding spirituality
- Working with loss and bereavement
- Working with depression
- Working within difference and diversity
- Applying the core theoretical model: understanding depression

Element 2: Foundational Counselling Skills

- The Ending Stage (Stage 3)
- Handling endings
- “Here and now” immediacy
- Understanding directivity and non-directivity
- Working with anger
- Working with depression
- Working with loss and bereavement
- Working with spiritual issues

Element 3: Personal Development

- Myself as a sexual and spiritual being
- Developing awareness of vulnerabilities and ‘blind spots’
- Change and growth in self

Assessment Items:

1. A counselling skills demonstration and critical evaluation including a written critique (1500 words) and a verbal presentation.
2. A personal development profile (3000 words).



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