**CPT Advanced Diploma in Counselling Practice**

**(450 g.l.h.)**

**SYLLABUS:**

**Content and Aims**

To be awarded the final qualification of the CPT Advanced Diploma in Counselling Practice (NCPS accredited), candidates must complete seven course units, representing over 450 guided learning hours as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Title Units** | **Guided Learning Hours** | **Foundation /Option** |
| CORE THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH APPLICATION OF COUNSELLING THEORY AND HIGHER COUNSELLING SKILLS | 130 | *FOUNDATION UNIT 1* |
| COUNSELLING IN CONTEXT | 50 | FOUNDATION UNIT 2 |
| APPROACHES TO COUNSELLING SUPERVISION | 50 | *OPTION UNIT* |
| APPROACHES TO BRIEF THERAPY | 50 | *OPTION UNIT* |
| APPROACHES TO COUPLES COUNSELLING | 50 | *OPTION UNIT* |
| APPROACHES TO CHILD AND FAMILY THERAPY | 50 | *OPTION UNIT* |
| INTEGRATING THEORY AND PRACTICE IN SCHEMA THERAPY | 60 | FOUNDATION UNIT 3 |
| EVALUATING COUNSELLING PRACTICE | 50 | FOUNDATION UNIT 4 |
| THERAPEUTIC PRACTICE | 50 | *FOUNDATION UNIT 5* |
| COUNSELLING PRACTICUM | 50 | *FOUNDATION UNIT 6* |

**Foundation Course Units** shaded in **BLUE** above, include learning outcomes and assessment criteria, integrating five sets of core competencies into this qualification and training course.

These five sets of Core Competencies are:

1. Professional Framework
2. Assessment
3. Therapeutic Relationship
4. Knowledge and Skills
5. Self Awareness and Reflection.

These are further elaborated below:

1. Professional Framework Competences for setting professional and ethical boundaries, and working within an ethical, legal and professional framework to create a safe therapeutic space for the counselling or psychotherapy to take place.
2. Assessment Competences which focus on assessing the needs of diverse clients or patients within a clear framework for understanding psychological distress, which takes account of risk and the need to work within personal limits.
3. Therapeutic Relationship Competences focus on establishing and developing an authentic and enabling therapeutic relationship which concentrates on the particular needs of diverse clients or patients, from the first stages of establishing rapport through to a safe ending. These competencies recognise the central importance of the therapeutic relationship in therapy and the need to understand how to work with the relationship, including managing difficulties and ruptures.
4. Knowledge and Skills Competences that outline ability to relate theory to practice, which shows understanding of the individual, their difficulties and the process of change within a clear framework of skills and knowledge.
5. Self Awareness and Reflection Competences that show the ability to use self-awareness, self-knowledge, self-challenge, reflexivity and supervision to ensure the best interests of diverse clients and patients are at the forefront of the work.

**OPTION UNITS** in **GREEN** include specialist theory and practice models e.g. Approaches to Delivering Supervision, Approaches to Brief Therapy, Couples Counselling, and Child and Family Therapy. Each OPTION Unit includes a balance of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and opportunities for reflection and application. Only ONE of these OPTION units will be covered during the two year Advanced Diploma in Counselling Practice accredited by the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society. Completion of an OPTION unit in any one of these subjects does NOT represent a formal accreditation in supervision skills, couples therapy, child and family therapy or brief therapy.

**UNIT DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTENT**

**FOUNDATION UNIT 1: CORE THEORETICAL APPORACHES TO COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY AND APPLICATION OF THEORY TO PRACTICE (130 HOURS)**

**Description**

The unit will develop an understanding of an the ability to apply the theory and practice of therapy from assessment to ending including knowledge of a model of person and mind, a model of gendered and culturally influenced human development, a model of human change and ways in which change can be facilitated, a model of therapeutic relationship and a set of clinical concepts to relate theory to practice.

Teaching will allow the development of the ability to use the therapeutic relationship to work with the client's ‘unconscious’ or ‘out of awareness’ perceptions, experiences and distortions of the therapist and the therapeutic relationship to enhance therapeutic change. In addition, students will develop the ability to understand and track the process of change within a core, coherent theoretical framework and adopt a stance as therapist in accordance with it, selecting and using appropriate therapeutic interventions and responses.

Furthermore, students will be encouraged to demonstrate the capacity, knowledge and understanding of how to select and adapt interventions and approaches to respond to the needs of the client, recognising, respecting and working to support and enhance the autonomy of the client.

Students will learn to use skills and interventions for the benefit of the clients, that are consistent with underlying theoretical knowledge, reflecting upon the complex and sometimes contradictory information gained from clients and to coherently describe their present difficulties and the potential origins using a clear theoretical model or approach.

**Syllabus includes**:

*Person-centred/Humanistic Counselling*

* Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs
* Carl Rogers and the person-centred approach
* Contemporary developments and theorists of the humanistic approach.
* Therapeutic alliance
* Congruence/Incongruence
* Psychological contact
* The Counselling Process Model
* Empathy / Advanced Empathy
* Humanistic Existential view of the human condition
* Self-actualisation
* Core Conditions
* Conditions of worth
* Unconditional Positive Regard
* True self/Ideal Self
* Working with levels of competence
* Self-Awareness
* Phenomenology and Existentialism

*Cognitive Behavioural Therapy*

* Personality theory of Aaron Beck
* Faulty thinking and maladaptive interpretations
* Albert Ellis and REBT
* The ABCDE Framework
* Behaviour and Cognitive Restructuring
* Contemporary Developments and CBT theory
* Language and terminology in CBT
* Conditioning
* Irrational Beliefs - Debating/Disputing Irrational Beliefs
* Setting homework and other CBT techniques
* Goals/target
* Structuring endings and contracting
* Referring Ethically

*Psychodynamic Psychotherapy*

* Freud and Freud’s model of the mind
* Id, Ego, Super Ego
* Functions of the Ego
* Psychosexual stages of development
* Defence Mechanisms
* Transference/Countertransference
* Making interpretations
* Resistance and bringing to awareness
* Strengths and weaknesses of psych.D counselling
* Erickson’s theory of psychosocial development
* Carl Jung’s Collective Unconscious
* Melanie Klein’s Projective Identification and Splitting
* Winnicott – the nursing triad
* Malan Triangle of Insight
* The hidden self and unfulfilled self; risks in relation to competence
* Margaret Mahler, Bowlby and Ainsworth
* Attachment theory

Object Relations Theory

**Unit Assessment:**

* Reflective Journal (minimium of 12 Reflective Journal to be submitted, 800 words per journal )
* Written Assignment (Essay 2,500 - 3,000 words)
* Practical Skills Role Play (Formal assessment in Therapist, Client and Observer Roles)

## FOUNDATION UNIT 2: COUNSELLING IN CONTEXT (50 HOURS)

**Description**

Upon completing this unit, students will have developed the ability to reflect upon their own identity, culture, values and worldview, and have the capacity to work and communicate authentically in a non-discriminatory and anti-oppressive manner, and the ability to integrate relevant theory and research in the areas of diversity and equality into clinical practice. Furthermore, students will learn the ability to acknowledge diversity and explore the impact of discrimination, prejudice and oppression on mental health and recognize when technologically mediated therapy effects a lowering of inhibition in either the client and / or the therapist and b) regulate and understand the impact this has on the therapeutic relationship.

## Syllabus includes but is not limited to:-

* Trans-cultural perspectives in counselling practice
* Identity, culture and ethnicity
* Anti-discrimination practice and working with differences, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, biomedical factors, gender, sexual orientation, religious practices, neurodiversity.
* Understanding and addressing racial trauma
* Becoming a culturally sensitive practitioner and working with diversity
* Counselling in the workplace
* Bereavement and grief counselling
* Counselling in healthcare and educational settings
* Counselling in the voluntary sector
* Counselling victims of major disasters
* Economic, social and political issues and social justice
* Group counselling
* Counselling the elderly
* Drugs and substance abuse
* Ethical dilemmas inherent in the practice of counselling within a multiplicity of contextual settings

**Unit Assessment:**

* 3 Reflective Journal Entries
* Written Assignment (*2000-2500 words)*
* Student Projects and Class Presentation (accompanied by written porject summary 1,500-2,000 words)

**OPTION UNIT: APPROACHES TO COUNSELLING SUPERVISION (50 HOURS)**

**Description:**

A training unit on counselling supervision is essential for preparing experienced counsellors to become effective supervisors for other counsellors. Beginning with definingcounselling supervision and its role in the counselling profession, this unit will help to promote the importance of supervision in ensuring ethical and effective counseling practice.

**Syllabus includes**:

* Models and theories of supervision: Hawkins and Shohet , Inskipp and Proctor, Kadushin, Carroll, supervision as a developmental model, key issues model, training model and model specific supervision.
* Cultural competence in supervision
* Techniques, skills, and methods in supervision
* Supervisory relationship development, challenges that arise in the the supervisory relationship and strategies to address them.
* Supervision challenges and solutions, supervisor self-awareness
* Supervision in different settings, educational, healthcare, private practice, voluntary sector
* Self-care and burnout prevention: importance of self-care for supervisors.
* Legal and ethical considerations in supervision
* Ethical matters specific to the supervisory role, documentation, liability, and informed consent in supervision
* Exploration of the role of professional organizations in setting standards for supervision
* Evaluating trainees' supervisory skills and providing constructive feedback

**Unit Assessment*:***

* 3 Reflective Journals

**OPTION UNIT: APPROACHES TO BRIEF THERAPY (50 HOURS)**

**Description:**

This unit provides foundational knowledge and practical skills for delivering effective brief therapeutic interventions to equip students with the basic principles, techniques, and practical skills needed to conduct brief therapy interventions effectively.

**Syllabus includes**:

* Definition and history of brief therapy
* Key components of models of brief therapy, transference focused, solution focused, strategic focused, cognitive behavioural brief therapy, narrative therapy, motivational interviewing and depth orientated.
* Key ideas that the major schools of counselling and psychotherapy hold in relation to brief therapy
* Practical skills and case studies
* Client engagement and empowerment, techniques for engaging clients and building rapport quickly
* Crisis intervention in brief therapy
* Key challenges to ethical practice when working in a time-limited way
* Risk assessment and treatment planning, key risks to counsellor and client(s).
* Self-awareness in working with brief therapy

**Unit Assessment:**

* 3 Reflective Journals

**OPTION UNIT: APPROACHES TO COUPLES COUNSELLNG (50 HOURS)**

**Description:**

Couples therapy, also known as couples counselling or marriage therapy, encompasses various models and approaches to help couples improve their relationships and resolve conflicts. This unit will set out notable models of couples counselling:

1. *Emotionally-focussed couples therapy* (Susan Johnson) focuses on identifying and addressing emotional patterns and attachment needs within couples, it emphasizes the importance of emotional responsiveness and bonding in relationships and seeks to create secure emotional connections.
2. *Gottman method couples therapy* (Drs. John and Julie Gottman) based on extensive research into the factors that predict relationship success or distress, identifies specific behaviours and communication patterns that can predict relationship problems and intervenes to address these problematic behavioural and communication patterns.
3. *Imago relationship therapy* (Harville Hendrix and Helen LaKelly Hunt), focuses on the concept that individuals are drawn to partners who mirror unresolved issues from their past, helps couples understand and heal their childhood wounds by using their relationship as a therapeutic tool.
4. *Narrative couples therapy* encourages couples to examine the stories they tell themselves about their relationship viewing problems as separate from the individuals in the relationship and helps couples re-author their narratives to develop positive stories about their relationships. Other models covered will include behavioural couples therapy, integrative couples therapy and sex therapy for couples.

These models of couples therapy offer diverse approaches to helping couples navigate relationship challenges, improve communication, and create healthier connections. Therapists select the most appropriate model or integrate elements from multiple models based on the unique needs and dynamics of each couple.

**Syllabus includes**:

* Clarify the term couples counselling
* Key components of notable models of couples therapy
* Key ideas that the major schools of counselling and psychotherapy hold in relation to couples counselling
* Learn skills and techniques from each model of couples counselling
* Assess the use and application of counselling skills for couples counselling
* Key challenges to ethical practice when working with couples
* Assess potential risks to counsellors and clients
* Self-awareness in working with couples

**Unit Assessment:**

* 3 Reflective Journals

**OPTION UNIT: CHILD AND FAMILY THERAPY (50 HOURS)**

**Description:**

Family and child therapy encompasses a range of models and approaches, each with its own theoretical foundations and techniques. This unit will set out notable models of family and child therapy including:

i) *Structural family therapy* (Salvador Minuchin) focuses on the family's structure, roles, and boundaries. The therapist examines family hierarchies, power dynamics, and subsystems to identify areas of dysfunction i

i) *Family systems therapy* (Murray Bowen) views the family as an interconnected system where the behaviour of one member affects the entire family unit includes concepts of developing individuality within the family), triangulation (conflicts involving three parties).

iii) *Narrative family therapy* (White and Epstein) emphasizes the power of storytelling in shaping individuals' and families' identities and realities (see also narrative couples therapy above).

iv) *Solutiuon-focussed therapy* SFBT (Steve de Shazar and Insoo Kim Berg, is future-oriented and brief, focusing on identifying solutions rather than problem where therapist and client work collaboratively to set specific, achievable goals and amplify strengths and resources.

Along with *play therapy* which is designed for children, using play as a natural medium for expression and communication and *attachment based family therapy*, all these models of family and child therapy offer diverse approaches to addressing family and child-related issues, and therapists often choose the one that best aligns with their clients' needs and preferences. Additionally, integrative approaches may combine elements from multiple models to tailor therapy to individual cases.

**Syllabus includes**:

* Understanding developmental and life transitions
* Working with the attachment-in family therapy drawing from attachment theory, exploring the impact of early attachment experiences on an individual's emotional and relational well-being.
* Family systems and family roles, power dynamics, working multi-generationally; interventions with step-families
* Evaluating skills used in the notable models of child and family therapy
* Benefits of having specifically designed approaches to counselling for working with children and adolescents and families
* Special considerations for counselling children and adolescents.
* Play therapy and creative interventions

**Unit Assessment:**

* 3 Reflective Journals

## FOUNDATION UNIT 3: INTEGRATING THEORY AND PRACTICE CORE THEORY MODEL SCHEMA THERAPY (60 HOURS)

**Description:**

Schema Therapy, developed by Dr. Jeffrey E. Young, is a comprehensive and integrative therapeutic approach that combines elements of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), attachment theory, and psychoanalytic concepts. It was specifically designed to address deep-seated, pervasive emotional and behavioral patterns called "schemas" that develop early in life and impact an individual's emotional well-being and relationships throughout their lifetime. Schemas are core, enduring themes or beliefs about oneself, others, and the world that develop in childhood in response to unmet emotional needs. such as safety, connection, and autonomy. Modes are the emotional states and coping strategies that individuals adopt in response to their schemas.

In Schema Therapy, the therapist takes on the role of a "limited reparenting" figure, providing the emotional support and guidance that clients may not have received in childhood. Schema therapy has two main phases: Assessment and education and ii) Change phase. Within assessment and change phases, the therapist employs behavioural, experiential, relational, and limited reparenting and other powerful techniques as well as cogntivie strategies, imagery and homework (from CBT) to enhance effectiveness.

Schema Therapy is particularly effective for individuals with longstanding emotional difficulties, personality disorders, and complex psychological issues rooted in childhood experiences. It offers a holistic approach that addresses the deep-seated issues that traditional CBT alone may not fully reach. The therapist-client relationship in Schema Therapy is critical, as it often mirrors the limited reparenting that clients need to heal and develop healthier schemas and modes. Completion of this unit and the Advanced Diploma course does NOT certify students in schema therapy. The knowledge and skills acquired in this advanced training does however give practioners access and eligibility, post qualification plus accreditation, to specialist certification training programmes in schema therapy approved by the International Society of Schema Therapy (ISST).

**Syllabus includes:**

* Summarise key concepts of schema theory – schemas, modes, coping styles, core emotional needs, schema development and maintainence, schema healing
* Contributions of the different theorists associated with the history and development of schema therapy
* Self-awareness in relation to the practice of schema therapy – therapist pitfalls
* Understand, practice and evaluate interventions of schema therapy
* The key strengths, challenges to and limitations of schema therapy
* Skills required to establish the therapeutic relationship within schema therapy.
* Evaluate the skills required for sustaining, evaluating and concluding the therapeutic relationship within schema therapy

**Unit Assessment:**

* 4 Reflective Journals
* Structured Writing Assignment - Integrating Schema Theory with Practice

## FOUNDATION UNIT 4: EVALUATING COUNSELLING PRACTICE (50 HOURS)

## Description:

## In this unit, students will acquire the ability to understand, assess and apply research evidence to own practice, drawing upon and evaluating published research on counselling and psychotherapy, and integrating relevant research findings to enhance practice. Through the class teaching and experiential work, students will develop the ability to utilise audit and evaluation tools to monitor and maintain standards within practice settings and utilise audit and evaluation methodologies to contribute to improving the process and outcomes of therapy. Furthermore, students will be able to communicate clearly, appropriately and using understandable language with clients, colleagues and other professionals providing and receiving information which may be complex, sensitive and (or) contentious.

**Syllabus includes:**

* Research methods and the challenge of research in counselling
* Ethics of counselling research
* Conducting a meaningful enquiry into counselling practice, case study research, qualitative and quantitative methods, outcomes and narrative studies.
* Client, therapist and relational factors in therapeutic change – what works, and for who, does orientation matter?
* Technique and practice factors, reflecting on practice
* UK and EU business systems, procedures
* UK and EU requirements for counselling practices and practitioners

**Unit Assesment:**

* 3 Reflective Journals
* Lead a Research Paper Discussion – select a primary research publication published since 2021
* Writing Assignment (2,000 – 2,500 words)

## FOUNDATION UNIT 5: THERAPEUTIC PRACTICE (50 HOURS)

**Description:**

In this unit students will continue to acquire the knowledge and understanding to be able to make an initial and ongoing assessment of client problems and suitability for therapy being offered. Training will convey to students a working knowledge of common mental health problems and symptoms of psychological distress (with due understanding of cultural norms) and teach trainee counsellors to evaluate these symptoms during assessment and throughout therapy. Teaching in this unit will also include lectures and resources to understand core issues relating to the role of psychiatric drugs, dependence and withdrawal and the implications these have for clients or patients in therapy and devise a comprehensive risk assessment strategy where necessary. An important aspect of this unit includes students developing the ability to recognise own professional limitations, and in collaboration with clients or patients and other professionals as appropriate, be able to manage the process of referral during assessment and throughout therapy.

**Syllabus includes:**

* Ethical principles, values and guidelines in counselling
* Steps to ethical decision-making
* Healthy and safety issues
* Professional standards and practices in client contracting, confidentiality, and informed consent, maintaining client autonomy, prevention of client exploitation
* Legal issues e.g. record-keeping, data protection
* Role of supervision in ethical practice
* Supervisor – Counsellor working alliance
* Contribution and effectiveness of supervision with regard to counsellors’ and clients’ needs. How development of self-awareness contributes to the effectiveness of the therapeutic relationship and process
* Assessment and diagnosis   
  Building rapport and establishing a therapeutic alliance
* Techniques for client assessment and case conceptualization.
* Understanding common mental health disorders and diagnostic criteria.

**Unit Assessment:**

* 3 Reflective Journals
* Writing Assignment (2,100 – 2,300 words)

**FOUNDATION UNIT 6: COUNSELLING PRACTICUM (50 HOURS)**

**Description:**

In this unit students will acquire the knowledge of and ability to operate within professional, legal and ethical frameworks within an approved supervised placement. Students will develop the ability to make an initial and ongoing assessment of a client’s or patient’s problems and suitability for therapy being offered and have the ability to use an initial and ongoing clinical assessment strategy that is informed by a consistent, coherent and in-depth theoretical approach.

Students will be trained in negotiating, maintaining and reviewing an appropriate contract with the client, taking account of timing, practice setting and duration of therapy, ensuring that the client’s or patient’s consent is explicitly informed and freely given. In addition, students will learn to create regular opportunities for the client or patient to review and feed back their experience of the therapy as well as protecting the confidentiality and privacy of clients or patients from unauthorised access or disclosure by informing them in advance about any reasonably foreseeable limitations of confidentiality and privacy.

Training will ensure students learn to provide and maintain a secure framework for both therapist and clients, in terms of meeting arrangements and the therapy setting, evaluate own work within an ethical framework and apply the framework to resolve conflicts and ethical dilemmas. Students will learn to work with ethical difficulties and dilemmas, including addressing and resolving contradictions between different codes of practice and conduct, or between ethical requirements and work requirements. Finally, students will have the ability to incorporate equality awareness and consideration of diversity of client’s or patient’s identity, culture, language, values and worldview into ethical decision-making

**Syllabus includes:**

* Working within legal and ethical requirements as a counselling practitioner
* Knowledge and understanding of a professional ethical framework and its application to counselling practice
* Respond effectively to complex client issues and ethical dilemmas
* Address professional issues for the candidate in regard to counselling placement
* Potential areas of conflict between the candidate and counselling placement
* Effects of supervision on own practice

**Unit Assessment:**

* 4 Reflective Journals
* Supervision Log
* Supervisor’s Report: initial report at 3mths and final summary report following completion of 100 client hours
* Study of Supervised Practice (to be completed as a result of 100 hours of counselling placement).

**T*otal number of guided learning hours = 450 hours over two years.***