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**NCPS Accredited Advanced Diploma In Counselling Practice *(450 guided learning Hours, Level 5 equivalent)***

**INtroduction**

The CPT Advanced Diploma in Counselling Practice (NCPS accredited) is a 450 guided learning hour qualification, which has been developed specifically to provide an accessible professional level qualification for counselling practitioners. ‘Counselling practitioner’ includes all categories of individuals engaged in therapeutic counselling with clients, professionally or voluntarily, and also includes those who are in the process of starting out in such a practice.

The Advanced Diploma in Counselling Practice is intended primarily for part-time study in association with the candidates’ live counselling practice work with clients. A minimum 100-hour supervised counselling placement is required as part of this course. The Advanced Diploma in Counselling Practice is designed to show that successful candidates have achieved the personal and professional standards in both intellectual and practical skills, which are at least those propounded by the leading professional bodies and standard-setting organizations for therapeutic counselling practitioners (NCPS, and others including BACP, UKCP). Therefore, in completing this qualification, successful candidates can achieve all of the training elements towards their individual professional accreditation. The focus for this qualification is the promotion of best practice combined with a strong academic theme. In keeping with the traditions of best practice in therapeutic counselling, candidates commit to interacting with their peer student group from the outset to develop the following:

* Study skills
* Problem solving
* Critical reasoning
* Data collection and research
* Analysis and interpretation

The core model (Schema Therapy) central for study does not limit your study base, as candidates are also challenged to critically analyse and evaluate key aspects of the Schema approach, relative to other theories, which will require a significant conceptual knowledge of alternative theoretical traditions (introduced during Level 3 and further studied in Counselling Theory and Application units in this course).

*Opportunities*

Upon completion of the Advanced Diploma in Counselling Practice, candidates will have acquired substantial conceptual knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the practice of modern therapeutic counselling. They will also have acquired much deeper insight into their own capacity, capability and limitations to engage effectively in a wide range of complex therapeutic relationships with different clients. Successful candidates will have the opportunity to progress into:

* Employment, with one of the many counselling services operating in the UK
* Self-employment i.e. Professional Private Practice
* Voluntary service
* Teaching & Higher Education

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Advanced counselling training aims to provide professionals with the specialized tools and insights needed to work effectively with complex client issues and diverse populations.

The primary learning goal of the Advanced Diploma is to prepare counsellors for more specialized, challenging, and rewarding roles in the field while improving the quality of care and outcomes for their clients. The ethical dimension of counselling is stressed throughout. The qualification requires a learning environment, which mirrors and models the safety of a counselling relationship. Through personal development, participants will explore their own spiritual, social and moral values as this impacts on their use of counselling skills and seek to deliver anti-oppressive practice.

The qualification comprises SIX Foundation Units: *Core Theoretical Approaches to Counselling & Psychotherapy and Application of Higher Counselling Skills, Counselling in Context, Introduction to Schema Therapy*, *Evaluating Counselling Practice, Therapeutic Practice* and *Counselling Practicum*).

In completing this qualification, successful candidates can achieve all the training elements towards their individual professional accreditation with key professional bodies including the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society (NCPS). This qualification enables students to immediately embark on practice working within diversity in a variety of practice settings within an ethical framework and an understanding of legal and business requirements for working within the United Kingdom.

The range of counselling approaches taught and learned, facilitate both personal and professional development, thus contributing to learning in a personal, as well as a more formalized sense. Students will acquire skills and knowledge essential for practice through experiential classroom activities, reflective journaling, case presentation and study. Communication and relationship are two essential ingredients of counselling. Experiential components of the course focus students attention on themselves in order that they will be able reflect and sometimes critically to analyze their own experiences and ability to formulate and develop some problem-solving strategies involving complex counselling problems in the relative safety of a simulated counselling environment. The course is intended to provide students with the opportunity of a safe environment in which to work on developing, refining, experimenting with, evaluating and extending their range of counselling skills, techniques and style.

Students are introduced to and given opportunities to study complex counselling situations and to develop appropriate skills and techniques needed to work at an advanced level of practice. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to share ideas and experiences with other students and to have an opportunity to simulate counselling situations involving complex and unusual client issues within the comparative safety of a group. They will learn to evaluate the effectiveness of different techniques and styles in establishing, sustaining and concluding therapeutic relationships with different clients presenting complex and/or sensitive issues.

Students are expected to make appropriate use of counselling supervision and evaluate their own work. The one-hundred-hour placement requirement in this qualification is essential to the personal and professional development of the practitioner.

**ADVANCED DIPLOMA SPECIFICATION AT A GLANCE**

Structure

This is a unitized programme which requires all six units to be passed for the candidate to qualify for the award of the Advanced Diploma.

1. **Core Theoretical Approaches to Counselling and Psychotherapy with Application and Higher Counselling Skills** *(Knowledge and Skills in the Application of Counselling Theory & Developing Higher Counselling Skills to support the development, maintenance, and conclusion of the therapeutic relationship in CBT, Psychodynamic and Humanistic Counselling)*
2. **Counselling in Context** *(Working within diversity, skills, awareness and knowledge for developing anti-oppressive practice)*
3. **Introduction to Schema Therapy**
4. **Evaluating Counselling Practice** *(Action research including in-depth understanding of client, client preference and self /setting assessment)*
5. **Therapeutic Practice** *(Working within a professional framework)*
6. **Counselling Practicum** *(Combining knowledge from all of above with self awareness and reflection in a Supervised Counselling Placement of minimum of a hundred one-to-one counselling hours with appropriate clients with complex presentations)*

Recommended nominal personal learning time (personal study/reading time) for units 1 to 5 combined is 220 to 250 learning hours, and Unit 6 will require a further 20 to 30 personal learning hours.

**Content and Aims**

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **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 | 90 | FOUNDATION UNIT 2 |
| INTRODUCTION TO SCHEMA THERAPY | 50 | FOUNDATION UNIT 3 |
| EVALUATING COUNSELLING PRACTICE | 60 | FOUNDATION UNIT 4 |
| THERAPEUTIC PRACTICE | 60 | *FOUNDATION UNIT 5* |
| COUNSELLING PRACTICUM | 60 | *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 reflecting the important work and expansive descriptions within SCoPEd framework[[1]](#footnote-1). These are 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.

**UNIT DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTENT**

## FOUNDATION UNIT 1: CORE THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY AND APPLICATION OF THEORY TO PRACTICE (130 HOURS TOTAL)

**Description**

The unit will develop an understanding of and 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-actualization
* Core Conditions
* Conditions of worth
* Unconditional Positive Regard
* True self/Ideal Self
* Working with levels of competence
* Self-Awareness
* Phenomenology and Existentialism
* Deliberate practice of core person-centred skills and interventions including therapist self-awareness, empathic understanding, empathic affirmation and validation, exploratory questioning, evocative responding, empathic conjecture, staying in psychological contact in the presence of strong emotion/intense affect, self-disclosure, addressing ruptures and facilitating repair

*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
* Deliberate practice of core CBT interventions
* Goals/target
* Structuring endings and contracting
* Referring Ethically
* Higher skills in CBT including explaining rationale for CBT approach, establishing goals, negotiating a session agenda, assigning and reviewing between session activities, working with cognitions, behaviours, and emotions, therapist flexibility, responding to alliance ruptures in CBT, responding to client resistance, triad role play extended case vignettes

*Psychodynamic Psychotherapy*

* Freud and Freud’s model of the mind
* Id, Ego, Super Ego
* Functions of the Ego
* Psychosexual stages of development
* Defense Mechanisms
* Transference/Countertransference
* Making interpretations
* Resistance and bringing to awareness
* Strengths and weaknesses of psychodynamic 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
* Deliberate practice of core psychodynamic counselling skills including engaging in therapeutic inquiry, being aware of countertransference reactions, deepening emotional experience, making process comments, pointing out defences and inquiring about underlying fear, immediacy, introducing rationale for treatment, making transference interpretations, using metaphors, exploring fantasy, case formulation and history taking, identifying past and present links, using supervision to recognize re-enactments, providing corrective emotional experience.

**Unit Assessment:**

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

## FOUNDATION UNIT 2: COUNSELLING IN CONTEXT (90 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:-

* Identity, culture, power and justice
* 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, cultural humility, working with emotions in context and understanding power and privilege
* Counselling in the workplace
* Bereavement and grief counselling
* Counselling in healthcare and educational settings
* Counselling in the voluntary sector
* Counselling and technology – online, social, and use of AI
* Economic, social and political issues and social justice
* Group counselling
* Counselling the elderly
* Drugs and substance abuse
* Brief therapy models – solution-focused, strategic and narrative models
* Counselling in social care settings
* Couples counselling models
* Child and family therapy
* Ethical dilemmas inherent in the practice of counselling within a multiplicity of contextual settings
* Higher skills for multicultural therapy interventions including therapist self-awareness cultural humility, assessing client expectations, reflecting content through a cultural lens, inquiring about identity / cultural opportunities, working with emotions in context, maintaining a not-knowing stance , inquiring about cultural implications of the problem/opportunities, acknowledging therapist limitations, gathering information about safety concerns, talking about sex and success, and repairing relationship ruptures due to microaggressions.

**Unit Assessment:**

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

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Have an extensive knowledge and understanding of counselling within a range of counselling contexts.

1.1 Describe and analyse your own awareness of the importance of diversity, social and cultural aspects for counselling practice

1.2 Evaluate how counselling in different contexts can both inform and extend the counsellor's own practice

1.3 Analyse responses to complex client issues and ethical dilemmas within diversity of counselling contexts

1.4 Evaluate the practical issues of contextual counselling on the counselling process

2. Understand the ethical and legal implications for counsellors working within

different professional counselling settings

2.1 Research and demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of ethical

and legal implications for counsellors within different professional counselling

contexts

2.2 Describe working to an Ethical Framework

2.3 Evaluate the impact of difference and diversity upon counselling practice

2.4 Critically evaluate diversity issues which impact on clients accessing

counselling

1. Be able to use a breadth of counselling skills necessary for working within different counselling contexts
   1. Identify and evaluate the skills required for working with clients in different

contexts

* 1. Evaluate self-awareness and the ability to appraise and reflect on your own practice

## FOUNDATION UNIT 3: INTRODUCTION TO SCHEMA THERAPY (50 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: i) Assessment and education and ii) Change phase. Within assessment and change phases, the certified therapist employs behavioural, experiential, relational, and limited reparenting and other powerful techniques as well as cognitive 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 and students will not be permitted to use the title of Schema Therapist, post qualification, without applying for and undertaking a full course of certification training and supervision, and be approved for practice by the International Society of Schema Therapy.**

**Pathways to Accreditation as Certified Schema Therapist:**

* **Schema Therapy Allied Health Assistant (STAHA)**
* **Auxiliary Professional Standard Certified Schema Therapist ( Aux Prof )**
* **Auxiliary Professional Advanced Certified Schema Therapist ( Aux Prof )**
* **Standard Certified Schema Therapist**
* **Advanced Certfied Schema Therapist**
* **Certified Supervisor**
* **Certified Trainer**

For further information please speak with the course tutors or pastoral co-ordinator.

**Content includes:**

* Summarize key concepts of schema theory – schemas, modes, coping styles, core emotional needs, schema development and maintenance, schema healing
* Contributions of the different theorists associated with the history and development of schema therapy
* Understand, practice and evaluate interventions of schema therapy
* The key strengths, challenges to and limitations of schema therapy
* Evaluate the skills required for sustaining, evaluating and concluding the therapeutic relationship within schema therapy
* Skills training will include a selection of the following deliberate practice skills, as determined by the Trainer: i) understanding and attunement, ii) supporting and strengthening the healthy adult mode, iii) schema education (beginning to understand current problems in schema terms), iv) linking unmet needs, schemas and presenting problems, v) identifying the presence of angry and vulnerable child modes, vi) limited reparenting for angry and vulnerable child modes, and vii) implementing behavioural pattern breaking through in-session practice and out of session assignments.

**Unit Assessment:**

* 4 Reflective Journal Entries
* Structured Writing Assignment

FOUNDATION UNIT 4: EVALUATING COUNSELLING PRACTICE (60 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
* Working with client preferences, client and therapist factors in outcomes research.
* UK and EU business systems, procedures, requirements for counselling practices and practitioners

**Unit Assessment:**

* 3 Reflective Journal Entries
* Lead a Research Paper Discussion – select a primary research publication published since 2020
* Written Assignment – research project proposal (2,000 – 2,500 words)

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of research theory and methods and their application to counselling practice.
   1. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of the application of different research methods and their strengths and weaknesses.
   2. Develop and demonstrate an understanding of why research is important to inform counselling practice.
   3. Demonstrate an understanding of why research is ethically required in counselling practice.
2. Show knowledge of UK business systems, procedures and criminal law for the efficient, effective , ethical and legitimate functioning of a counselling practice.
3. Evaluate the place of research in counselling and psychotherapy.
4. Evaluate the place of theory in counselling research

## FOUNDATION UNIT 5: THERAPEUTIC PRACTICE (60 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
* Psychopharmacology and understanding illness and medical interventions, psychoactive drugs
* 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
* Techniques for client assessment and case conceptualization.
* Understanding common mental health disorders and diagnostic criteria.

**Unit Assessment:**

* 3 Reflective Journal Entries
* Structured Writing Assignment (2,000 – 2,500 words)

**FOUNDATION UNIT 6: COUNSELLING PRACTICUM (60 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 feedback 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
* Skills for strengthening the therapeutic alliance
* Working with client feedback
* Addressing power imbalances and working with the immediacy of the therapeutic engagement
* Address professional issues for the candidate in regard to counselling placement
* Planning for and mitigating potential areas of conflict between the candidate and counselling placement.
* Effects of supervision on own practice

**Unit Assessment:**

* 4 Reflective Journal Entries
* Supervision Log
* Supervisor’s Report: initial report at 3 months 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.***

1. January 2022 SCoPEd Framework - A shared framework and scope of practice and education for counselling and psychotherapy with adults [↑](#footnote-ref-1)