

Module specification

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Module Code	COU514
Module Title	Understanding client issues in counselling practice
Level	5
Credit value	40
Faculty	Social & Life Sciences
HECoS Code	100495
Cost Code	GACG
Pre-requisite module	All Level 4 Modules (Diploma of Higher Education in Counselling)

Programmes in which module to be offered

Programme title	Core/Optional/Standalone
Diploma of Higher Education in Counselling	Core

Breakdown of module hours

Learning and teaching hours	77hrs
Placement tutor support hours	0hrs
Supervised learning hours e.g. practical classes, workshops	0 hrs
Project supervision hours	0 hrs
Active learning and teaching hours total	77 hrs
Placement hours	0 hrs
Guided independent study hours	323 hrs
Module duration (Total hours)	400 hrs

Module aims

This module aims to help students review and deepen their understanding of the different “tribes” within person-centred counselling, explore key professional issues, and critically examine common criticisms of the person-centred approach. It also encourages learners to research and engage with at least one other counselling tradition to inform their evaluation of person-centred perspectives. In addition, students will develop greater insight into the diverse reasons clients seek counselling and reflect on their own competence in working with at least one specific presenting issue.

Module Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, students will be able to:

1	Demonstrate a critical understanding of at least one other therapeutic approach and how this compares to person-centred practice in its applicability, for working with a specific presenting issue.
2	Demonstrate critical understanding of how theory and practice are linked.
3	Demonstrate a critical understanding of what brings clients to therapy in terms of their past and current issues and how these impact on the work in practice.

Assessment

Indicative Assessment Tasks:

Assessment 1: Presentation. Students are invited to explore a specific presenting issue such as depression, addiction, grief, or another relevant mental health concern and critically examine how Person-Centred Therapy, alongside one other therapeutic approach of your choice (e.g., Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Somatic Therapy, Creative Therapies or Gestalt Therapy etc), may help or hinder clients experiencing this issue.

Attendance: Attendance and participation are requirements of the course because they evidence the number of training hours received for potential future individual accreditation with professional bodies.

Assessment number	Learning Outcomes to be met	Type of assessment	Duration/Word Count	Weighting (%)	Alternative assessment, if applicable
1	1, 2, 3	Presentation	3000 words total	100%	N/A
2		Attendance		Pass/Fail	N/A

Derogations

N/A

Learning and Teaching Strategies

This module adheres to the Active Learning Framework (ALF), supporting learning through a blend of experiential, reflective, and interpersonal activities, including participation in community or home groups, independent reading, personal reflection, and optional journalling. Students are encouraged to engage in personal therapy or support activities where appropriate to deepen self-awareness, while tutorials and active involvement in a personal development group provide structured opportunities for guidance, growth, and integration of learning.

Welsh Elements

Students can present assessed and non-assessed work in Welsh, and can access all forms, resources, and email correspondence in Welsh where preferred. Students are also able to undertake personal tutorials and, where applicable, work placements through the medium of Welsh. All module information aligns with the Welsh language expectations set out in the programme specification, and appropriate support is available to ensure students can fully engage with the module in their chosen language.

Indicative Syllabus Outline

- Contracting / ethics etc. revisited.
- Professional issues: notes
- Professional Issues: Assessment & Outcome measures
- Using art (creativity) and Play.
- Client Issues: Loss and Grief.
- Client issues: Depression
- Client Issues: Trauma & Abuse
- Client issues: The social construction of childhood
- Criticisms of the person-centred approach.
- Attachment: Protective factors and resilience and adult attachment.
- Human growth and development models (Lifespan development)
- Revisiting other models and their relationship / differences to the person-centred approach.
- Presentations by students

Indicative Bibliography:

Please note the essential reads and other indicative reading are subject to annual review and update. Please refer to the Module handbook for relevant academic year for the latest reading list.

Essential Reads

Mearns, D. and Thorne, B. (2013) *Person-Centred Counselling in Action*. 4th edn. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Mearns, D. and Cooper, M. (2005) *Working at Relational Depth in Counselling and Psychotherapy*. London: Sage.

Reeves, A., & Bond, T. (2021). *Standards and ethics for counselling in action* (5th edition.). SAGE.

Tolan, J. and Wilkins, P. (2012) *Client Issues in Counselling and Psychotherapy*. London: Sage.

Tudor, K. (2008) *Brief Person-Centred Therapies*. London: Sage.

Other indicative reading

Bor, R. and Watts, M. (2011) *The Trainee Handbook: A Guide for Counselling & Psychotherapy Trainees*. 3rd edn. London: Sage.

NCPS Ethical Framework available to download: <https://ncps.com/about-us/code-of-ethics>

Administrative Information

For office use only	
Initial approval date	April 2026
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Date and details of revision	
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