



# CERTIFICATE IN COUNSELLING SKILLS FULL YEAR

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## TRAINEE HANDBOOK



# ABOUT GCS TRAINING

Gloucestershire Counselling Service (GCS) was established in 1980 as a counselling and training organisation. We have been providing training in counselling skills from introductory through to post graduate level since this time.

We cover a broad range of direct counselling services in a variety of settings across Gloucestershire, alongside a programme of training and development in psychodynamic counselling as well as other counselling. Our counselling services are offered at an affordable cost to our clients. We have to date subsidised the cost of counselling through the generation of income from the sale of our training courses and income generated from our Employee Welfare Service and Schools contracts.

Trainees on our Diploma course deliver counselling in the Open-Ended Adult Service as part of their counselling placement, which in turn allows the client fee to remain affordable. We currently subsidise through our income generating activity the Adult Individual, Couples and Child and Family Counselling Services (C&FCS). We are supported also via charitable donations where available.

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# COURSE DETAILS

## WHO IS THE COURSE FOR?

The certificate year provides a valuable basic training in counselling, both for those whose work or voluntary activities involve listening and counselling skills and also for those who may wish to pursue a professional counselling qualification. This year is designed to enhance these skills, develop ways of understanding patterns of human growth and behaviour and increase self-awareness.

## COURSE DURATION

The course consists of thirty 3½-hour sessions during the academic year from September to July. Each of the three terms consists of 10 sessions which are held at the same time and place each week with breaks for Christmas, Easter and half-terms, plus attendance is required at one Saturday workshop each term.

## ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS

At the end of the year, subject to satisfactory assessment, a Certificate in Counselling Skills is awarded. This certificate is not a licence to practice as a counsellor but is evidence of competence in basic counselling skills. It is an essential entry requirement to the Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling for which there are further selection procedures. This Certificate is also recognised as the basic entry qualification to Diploma training at other training providers throughout the UK.

Trainees will have discounted access to our CPD programme.

# COURSE DETAILS - CONTINUED

## SEMINARS

Each 3½-hour session will consist of:

1½-hour seminar, led by a Seminar Tutor. In this session there will be theoretical and practical topics covering counselling skills and attitudes. A programme will be given to you at the beginning of each term.

30 minute break (shorter break in Cheltenham)

1½-hour experiential (self-awareness) group.

The self-awareness groups provide an environment for the development of self-awareness through interaction with others within that group. Their purpose is to explore what is of concern to individual members and the group as a whole in the 'here and now'. It is part of the group's task to identify these concerns and discover how to work with them with the help of the facilitator. This work provides a source of learning about oneself and about group dynamics. The work of the group and the material revealed by individuals is confidential to the group unless there is a risk to self or others.

## SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

Attendance is required at 1 workshop each term. You will be allocated a date and this will be communicated to you at the start of each term.

The Saturday workshops are an integral part of the course. They focus on improving counselling skills and offer the opportunity to meet with trainees from other certificate course groups with GCS.

On the day you will work within small groups of 3 or 4 trainees, plus each group will be allocated a tutor who will offer support and feedback during skills practice for all or part of the day. The workshops take place at the main GCS premises in Stroud which will give trainees an opportunity to experience working in a quieter environment within individual counselling rooms.

### Full Workshop Dates

#### Workshop 1

11 November

18 November

#### Workshop 2

24 February

2 March

9 March

#### Workshop 3

15 June

22 June



# INDICATIVE SEMINAR CONTENT

## TERM 1

Counselling skills and the working alliance:

- Listening skills
- Empathic responses
- Non-verbal ways of communicating
- Providing boundaries: the counselling contract
- The working alliance
- Counselling skills practice

## TERM 2

The development of personal identity:

- Birth and infancy; “good enough” mothering
- The Oedipal phase and the latency period
- Puberty and early adolescence
- Late adolescence and early adulthood; separation anxiety
- Unconscious processes and defences
- Counselling skills practice

## TERM 3

Further issues of adult life and the application of counselling skills:

- Mid-life
- Old age and death
- Loss and mourning
- Defences and challenging the client
- How should counsellors and listeners look after themselves?
- Sexuality
- Couples and Families
- Endings and ending the counselling relationship
- Counselling skills practice



# ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The assessment governing the award of the certificate will take place during the summer term. It consists of:

- Confirmation of satisfactory attendance at all parts of the course (seminars, self-awareness groups and Saturday workshops). Each course tutor and facilitator will complete an attendance register. Any trainee missing more 20% (7 sessions) during the year will be unlikely to receive the certificate. A session consists of both seminars and group. Please note the Saturday workshops count as 2 sessions and it is expected trainees attend all 3 Saturday workshops. It is emphasised that because the sessions are largely experiential (exercises, role-play, etc.) it may not be possible to provide notes on sessions missed.
- Each trainee will be required to write two short essays; approximately 1200 words at the end of the first term and 1800 words at the end of the second term. The subjects and guidelines for completion will be given to you by the seminar tutor at the appropriate points during the first and second terms.
- The overall result of the assessment will be notified to you at the end of the course. Certificates will be sent as soon as possible thereafter or presented at an awards evening.



# COURSE JOURNAL & READING LIST

## COURSE JOURNAL

Each trainee is required to keep a personal course journal or diary recording his or her thoughts, feelings and comments covering the weekly sessions of the course. This journal is private and does not form part of the assessment process but is of great help in enabling the trainee to reflect on the course material. In the event of a future application for BACP accreditation, it provides a necessary log of the areas covered by the course.

## READING LIST

A reading list will be given to you at the start of the course. It gives an indication of the books you are expected to read as well as those books that are recommended reading. Many of the books on the reading list can be borrowed from GCS. Evidence of relevant reading will be of value in constructing your essays.

In Cheltenham your Course Tutor will advise you how to access books. For Stroud trainees, the library is located in the Training room. Please use the sheet in the library to sign out and in any books that you borrow. Books should not be borrowed for more than one month at a time

All books must be returned before the last session of the course; note that books that are not returned will be invoiced for the replacement cost.





# SUPPORT FOR TRAINEES

## THE COURSE TEAM

The course tutors are qualified and experienced counsellors / psychotherapists. They are all in practice which enables their teaching to be firmly based on experience.

Group facilitators are responsible for the self-awareness group work. They are experienced group facilitators and make available to the group members their interpretation of group activity as it facilitates self-awareness. They are also responsible for the maintenance of boundaries appropriate to this work.

## TUTORIALS

Seminar tutors will offer a tutorial to trainees during the course. The tutorial is an opportunity to discuss anything related to the course seminar material.

## PASTORAL TUTOR

A Pastoral Tutor is available to provide a confidential space for trainees to discuss any matters arising from the course or from their personal response.

## PERSONAL THERAPY

During the course you might wish to begin your own personal therapy. Please ask the Training Team or your Tutor for advice, as those going on to take part in the Diploma Course need to be with an approved therapist that meets certain criteria for the training.

## OFFICE SUPPORT

For all practical course enquiries please contact:

[training@gloscounselling.org.uk](mailto:training@gloscounselling.org.uk)

This email address is managed by our team of Training Coordinators who will be able to deal with any practical enquires or escalate an issue if required.



# TRAINING VENUES

## STROUD VENUE

- Facilities for making tea and coffee during the break are available in our small kitchen. We request that you do not take hot drinks or food into the training rooms.
- At Stroud, the administrative office contains confidential information and is normally kept locked out of office hours. Trainees needing to visit the office during office hours should be mindful that whilst the administration staff are always willing to help they also have exacting tasks to carry out. The staff work with confidential material and often sensitive situations on the telephone and trainees are asked to respect this.
- The central heating is controlled by the staff and should not be altered.
- Security is the responsibility of the staff, but if for any reason you are the last person to leave the premises, please make sure that all lights are turned off and the fire doors are closed.
- Entry to the Stroud premises is by an electronic door entry system. Trainees attending courses at Stroud will be informed of the entry code at the first session. This code is changed periodically. A signing in/out folder is located at the top of the stairs. We request that you sign in and out each time you are in the building to comply with Fire Regulations.
- Fire Precautions. Fire doors and a fire alarm system consisting of smoke detectors and alarm buttons protect the Stroud premises. A fire blanket and extinguisher are held in the kitchen on the first floor and extinguishers are also found on the first and second floors. Trainees should make themselves familiar with the location of these extinguishers and also the fire alarm buttons. Trainees will be informed of the procedures at the start of the course.



# TRAINING VENUES

## CHELTENHAM VENUE

The Cheltenham location will be **The Isbourne Centre**.

Please go to Building 4 and ring the buzzer for access.

### ADDRESS:

The Isbourne Centre, 2 Wolseley Terrace, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 1TH.

<https://www.isbourne.org/>

### ONLINE DIRECTIONS:

<https://w3w.co/labels.pinks.runner>

Trainees attending the Cheltenham venue will be made familiar with emergency procedures at those premises during the start of the course.



# DIRECTIONS

Course Location: Alma House, 52/53 High Street, Stroud. GL5 1AP  
Contact number: 01453 766 310

## **How to get to Stroud:**

### **By car from**

M5 - Take junction 13 and follow the signs for Stroud along the A419

M4 - Take junction 15 and follow the signs for Cirencester. Then take the A419 towards Stroud just before you get to Cirencester.

### **By train**

The train station is conveniently located and is approximately a 5 minute walk from GCS. For further information call the National Rail Enquiry Line 08457 484950 or go to their website [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

GCS has the two floors above Costa Coffee which is at the Parliament Street end of the High Street.

Parking is available at the Parliament Street Car Park which is just a few minutes walk away from GCS. Alternative parking can be found at Church Street, the Station and London Road. All day parking in Stroud costs £3 and can be paid using cash, telephone payment or the MiPermit app.

Our blue door is situated in the archway directly opposite the Retreat Pub in Church Street.

# COURSE DATES

## Certificate in Counselling Skills Term Dates 2023/24

Autumn

Term 1

**Start of Term:** 26th September - Cheltenham  
27th September - Stroud

**Half Term:** 30th October - 3rd November

**End of Term:** 5th December - Cheltenham  
6th December - Stroud

Spring

Term 2

**Start of Term:** 9th January - Cheltenham  
10th January - Stroud

**Half Term:** 12th - 16th February

**End of Term:** 19th March - Cheltenham  
20th March - Stroud

Summer

Term 3

**Start of Term:** 16th April - Cheltenham  
17th April - Stroud

**Half Term:** 27th - 31st May

**End of Term:** 2nd July - Cheltenham  
3rd July - Stroud

# COURSE FEES

## **Costs**

Deposit: £249

Course fee (including deposit) for the year 2023-24: £1899

## **Conditions of acceptance**

On accepting an offer of a place on the Certificate course, the trainee will be required to pay a registration fee of £249, which is a non-returnable deposit deducted from the course fee. This is a financial contract with the Gloucestershire Counselling Service.

The balance is payable either in full at the start of the course or in termly payments by Standing Order (including a £60 surcharge). Your fee agreement form has further details.

In the event of a trainee not taking up an accepted place the registration fee and any other fees already paid are non-refundable.

If a trainee withdraws from the course part way through the year, the full fees for the year are payable.

If GCS asks a trainee to withdraw from the course the fees paid up to and including that term are non-refundable.

In the event of a trainee anticipating or experiencing difficulty in meeting financial obligations to GCS, he/she should contact the Training Coordinators as soon as possible so that a mutually appropriate solution can be sought. An award cannot be made if there are any outstanding fees, unless an acceptable arrangement for the deferred payment has been made with GCS.

# OTHER MATTERS

## IT EQUIPMENT

GCS operates an entirely paperless distribution of documentation. We also make much use of our secure internal email system for communications, training and other service matters. It is therefore important that you have access to IT, email and printing facilities.

## COMPLAINTS

We work hard to ensure that trainees have a positive experience of adult learning at GCS. We aim wherever possible for issues to be addressed as locally as possible with the staff you are working directly with. However, we understand that this is not always possible and in the event of you wishing to explore a formal complaint, the Training Office can supply you with a copy of our Complaint's Procedure.

# PERSONAL DETAILS & EMERGENCY CONTACTS

We ask that you provide some personal details, including 2 people we can contact in case of emergency - these do not need to be your next of kin.

## How do I complete the information?

The Personal Details Record Form (PDRF) is an electronic Form held on the Microsoft Forms App.

## What do you do with the information I provide?

The information provided is stored within the Microsoft Forms App which is only accessible to Management Office Staff. In preparation for the new academic year, we will export all new information into an excel spreadsheet which is stored within the Management Office Staff group on Sharepoint. We do not share your information and will only use it if necessary.

## What if my details change?

Please remember to let us know by email to [training@gloscounselling.org.uk](mailto:training@gloscounselling.org.uk)

## Do I have to provide all the details?

No, your personal information is yours to distribute as you wish. However, please consider what information we would need should you be involved in an emergency.