



GCS DIPLOMA IN PSYCHODYNAMIC COUNSELLING SKILLS

APPLICATION PACK

COURSE PROVIDER



ACCREDITED BY



INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a guide to the Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling offered by the Gloucestershire Counselling Service. The Diploma is accredited by the British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC). It is a part-time course and is designed for people who intend training to practice as a Psychodynamic counsellor working with adult clients. Information on the Post Qualification Programme (PQY), which is intended for qualified practitioners seeking accreditation, is available in another booklet.

GCS trained counsellors have been successful in working independently in private practice in areas of primary care, in GP surgeries, with organisations and agencies providing counselling and in specialist areas such as counselling in schools, colleges and universities, and with employee assistance programs.

Supervised client work forms the heart of our training program and enables trainees to integrate their theoretical and practical training in a safe environment. Unlike some training courses our Diploma programme provides client work as well as regular supervision. At GCS our trainees do not have to search for clients. Our trainees are in placement with the Gloucestershire Counselling Service where clients are assessed and carefully allocated to trainees as appropriate.

GCS adheres to an equal opportunities policy and is positively committed to opposing discrimination. We recognise that there are processes inherent in any organization, including our own, which can work against this intention. We acknowledge that we have an obligation to be constantly re-examining all aspects of our policy development and implementation. We will aim to ensure that as far as is possible, equality of opportunity is available to all who work within GCS and use its services.

As a charity GCS tries to exercise the best possible stewardship of our financial resources to maintain the service.

GCS requests and securely holds personal information about trainees on our training programme. Details of how personal information is used and secured and your rights under the general data protection regulation, are explained in the GCS training course data privacy notice. Please e-mail training@gloscounselling.org.uk if you would like a copy.

ABOUT GCS

The Gloucestershire Counselling Service (GCS) was established in 1980 and is the major provider of counselling training services in Gloucestershire. GCS is accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). All counsellors at GCS adhere to and work within the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions.

GCS has two principal objectives:

1. To provide high quality professional counselling at affordable cost to the community of Gloucestershire and its surrounds.
2. To provide a programme of professional training in counselling.

Our Counselling Service offers a broad range of direct counselling services in a variety of settings. These services include:

- **Adult Counselling Service:** Offering confidential counselling to individual adults experiencing personal, emotional, or psychological difficulties. Diploma trainees are offered a placement within our Adult Counselling Service.
- **Couples Counselling Service:** For people experiencing difficulties in their relationships.
- **The Child and Family Counselling Service:** Counselling for families, children and young people who are experiencing difficulties.
- **School Counselling Service:** Counselling on school sites for individual pupils.

Our Training Department offers many training programmes. In addition to our introductory trainings in listening and counselling skills, we provide a comprehensive training programme for psychodynamic counsellors. This training comprises this three-year Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling and an additional post-diploma programme for counsellors seeking professional registration with organisations such as BACP and BPC.

We also offer training in supervision and couples work for qualified practitioners.

ABOUT THE DIPLOMA

The Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling is a three-year part-time training which combines theoretical seminars, group work, personal development, and counselling experience. All trainees are provided with a counselling placement and supervision within GCS's adult counselling service.

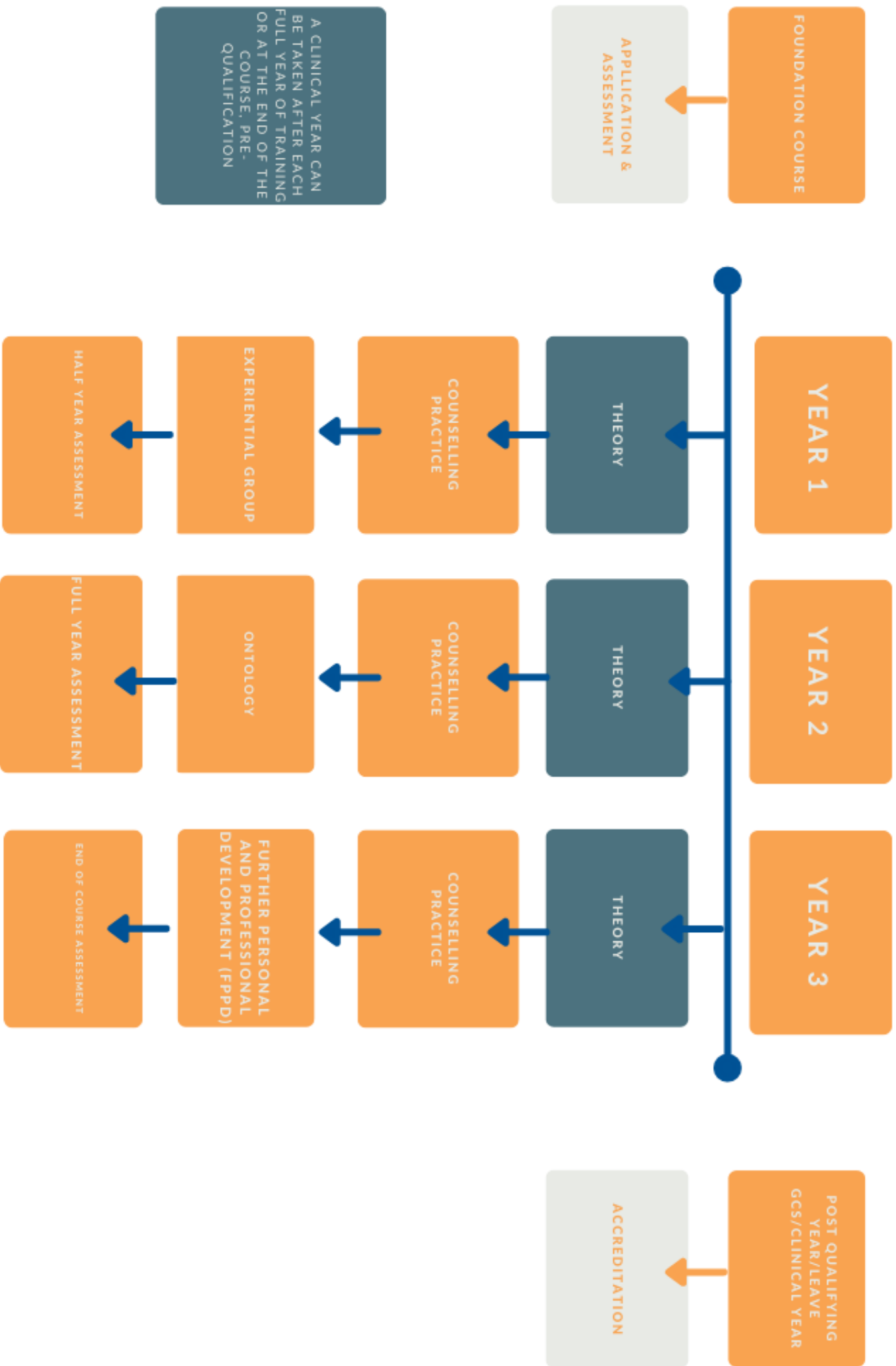
The Diploma enables trainees to learn about the theory and practice of counselling within a professional counselling service and to benefit from a well-established support structure during their training.

The Diploma is accredited by the British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC). Trainees automatically become members of the BPC trainee body and are entitled to belong to the BPC Trainees' Association.

The overall aims of the programme are:

- To provide a professional training and qualification, which is accredited and incorporates the relevant statutory training and competency requirements.
- To provide trainees with a professional training and qualification in Psychodynamic Counselling that has a sound theoretical base and which is underpinned by an application of psychodynamic theory and thinking.
- To provide trainees with a professional training that places strong emphasis on the value of regular supervision and the personal and professional development that comes from experiential learning and personal therapy.
- To provide this training within a professional counselling service, giving trainees direct experience of the organisational context within which practice takes place and the counsellor's role within a counselling service.
- To assist trainees in developing an appropriate value and belief system and their ability to demonstrate values that are relevant to anti-discriminatory practice.
- To develop transferable skills that are relevant to practitioners working with clients across a range of professional contexts.

TRAINING ROUTE



PHILOSOPHY AND COMMITMENT

Psychodynamic theory derives from a tradition of psychological thinking which recognises unconscious motivations and fantasies as the driving force behind behaviour. It places particular importance on patterns in the client's past and present in relation to self and others.

The task of psychodynamic counselling is to identify and understand such patterns so that clients may link current difficulties with past experiences in order to make changes in their lives. The 'here and now' of the counselling relationship is used to understand the client's past and present patterns of feeling and relating to others.

The course reflects the working model of GCS and is based upon a culture of reflection and group learning. All trainees will be expected to participate in regular groups and the teaching will primarily be delivered in group situations. Particular emphasis is placed on exploring the relationship between theory and practice and the delivery methods are designed to reflect the nature of the work. Trainees will be expected to self-reflect and explore ways in which they use their own "self" in their working relationships.

Trainees on the Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling make a substantial commitment to their training. In addition to the scheduled teaching time (explained later in this booklet) trainees need to set aside time for the following:

- **Preparation and reading.** Preparation and reading time is required for theory seminars and also for client work and supervision. Trainees will need to set aside at least 5 hours per week for preparation, although the actual amount will vary over the course.
- **Counselling Placement.** Trainees are placed in our own Counselling Service to gain experience with clients. Making time and space to see clients on a regular basis is an essential part of the Diploma training. First year trainees are expected to see at least one client per week, increasing to four clients per week in the second and third years.
- **Personal Therapy.** Trainees are required to be in once-weekly personal therapy for the duration of the course with a GCS-approved therapist. Please refer to the later section on Personal Therapy for more details.
- **Saturday workshops.** It will be necessary to attend occasional Saturday workshops, in order to maintain your Continuing Personal Development (CPD) hours (CPD is explained in a later section of this document), and to be further supported in aspects of your training. Dates of these workshops are given at the beginning of each year.

COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling has a modular structure. In each year trainees will complete a Theory module, a Counselling Practice Module and a module that is oriented around group work.

THEORETICAL MODULES (YEARS 1, 2 AND 3)

The content of the seminars and workshops in the theory modules focus on a psychodynamic approach to counselling. This includes looking at the early developmental years, the counselling relationship, psychopathology, working with the unconscious and the relevance of theoretical ideas to counselling. Space is also given to other therapeutic perspectives, and the trainee's own philosophical premises will need to be both challenged and reflected upon.

In year 1 trainees focus on theories of infant development and how early psychic structures can influence later thinking and behaviour. You will explore the theories of child and adolescent development across the lifespan before turning to a consideration of key clinical concepts, including the work of Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Donald Winnicott and Wilfred Bion, before moving on to consider how theory shapes psychodynamic practice. Working with the unconscious is explored, focusing on defences, transference and counter transference, and the interpretation of dreams.

In year 2 the aim is to further familiarise trainees with some of the main psychodynamic working concepts and their history, and how they relate to a range of clinical situations. You will look at the therapeutic frame, phases of therapy, the nature of the therapeutic relationship, and begin to develop a grasp of psychopathology and its uses. The focus will always be on your developing experience as a practitioner, and the sense you currently make of psychodynamic concepts and thinking. The work of Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein is further explored in depth, before moving on to psychopathology, looking at the true and false self, the schizoid personality, anxiety, borderline, and narcissistic disorders.

In year 3 trainees consider further the significance of pre-verbal experiences and how these impact on relationships and relating, thinking about transference in the counselling relationship. You will explore ways in which clients defend against the pain of the past coming alive in the present and how this might be seen and expressed in the transference/countertransference. Trainees then focus on the preparation and writing of a case study, helped by the use of Balint groups, while continuing to think about factors that can inhibit psychic change. Latterly you will consider ways in which theory and practice develop post qualification.

COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

COUNSELLING PRACTICE MODULES (CPM) (YEARS 1, 2 AND 3)

Supervised Counselling Placement with the GCS Counselling service

During the training trainees will work with a range of clients and are expected to see, on average, 1 client each week during the first year of their training and up to 4 clients each week in the second and third years. Clients can be seen at any GCS counselling venue, including Stroud, Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, Cirencester and Tewksbury.

Trainees are required to have completed a minimum of 200 hours of supervised client work by the end of their training.

It is important to recognise that client case work continues throughout the year and supervision of client work will take place with experienced psychodynamic supervisors for 1½ hours per week for 42 weeks a year. Supervision usually takes place in groups of three trainees. Case material is presented both in the close focus of a single session and also covering the longer-term development of cases.

The GCS Counselling Service aims to meet the client contact hours requirement through appropriate allocations, however no guarantee can be provided. Our ability to meet this requirement will depend on a number of factors including client demand, an appropriate number of clients suitable for trainees and the availability of the counsellor. In this latter respect prospective trainees should note that their availability to provide counselling in the evening and on days other than course days will have a significant bearing on receiving suitable allocations of clients.

Taught elements of the CPM module

The CPM modules also include seminars and workshops on professional skills and the context in which professional practice takes place:

- The external context: the statutory and legal frameworks; ethics, values and principles; professional guidelines and standards;
- The internal context: the organisational philosophy, policy framework and principles; the management and staff structure; the practitioner's role and responsibilities.
- Counselling skills practice

EXPERIENTIAL GROUP (YEAR 1 ONLY)

The purpose of the group is to promote self-awareness and awareness of others and, as the group progresses, it is hoped trainees will become increasingly aware of some of the main characteristics of group behaviour and of the different phases through which groups pass.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULES (YEARS 2 AND 3)

In the second year the Experiential Group sessions are replaced by Ontology seminars, and the third year by seminars on Further Professional Practice and Development. In these sessions trainees have the chance to re-evaluate their attitudes, both towards themselves and wider social and philosophical issues and to discover what has meaning and value for them.

CORE TRAINING TIMES, DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT

The timetabling of the training days will be confirmed by the end of July.

Currently Year 1 is on Monday afternoon (1pm – 7pm, Year 2 Tuesday afternoon (1pm – 7pm) and Year 3 Tuesday morning (9.30am – 3.30pm).

The course consists of 9 terms, 3 per year, each of 12 sessions (apart from the first term of the first year which is 10 sessions). Terms are usually aligned with the state school timetable. Supervision takes place over 42 weeks per year.

DELIVERY FORMAT

The course is planned and designed to be delivered in person at our main headquarters in Stroud. During the government mandated lockdown, we successfully adapted to training online, and will adapt appropriately as need arises in the future.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment procedure is intended to be as fair and as open as possible so that trainees are informed of the process and are shown any reports made about them. Assessment is continuous throughout the training and the processes themselves are intended to be constructive.

At the end of years 1 and 2 an assessment panel meets to consider the progress of each trainee and to make decisions on progression into the next year. Occasionally it is recommended that trainees repeat one or more modules of the course or take a clinical year. At the end of year 3 the panel makes a decision on whether to award the Diploma.

- In Year 1 trainees are required to write two 1500-word essays in the Theoretical Module. Assessment in the Counselling Practice Module will involve a supervisor's report plus a trainee self-assessment of their counselling development, and an essay on the BPC, BACP and GCS codes of ethics.
- In Year 2 trainees are required to write two 2000-word essays in the Theoretical Module. Assessment in the Counselling Practice Module will involve a supervisor's report plus a trainee self-assessment of their counselling development and an assessed piece derived from the taught research module. The Ontology module will require a reflective essay on one aspect of Ontology which has changed your perspective and way of thinking. Trainees are also asked to regularly present on a topic, such as 'Fathers', 'Racial Identity' or 'Spirituality'. An assessment report of the trainee's development and progress is also provided by the Tutor at the end of the academic year.

- In year 3 the Theory Module will require a case study of 4000 words. This is a major and substantial piece of work. The case study will show how the counselling theories and techniques taught on the course have been understood and relate to work with clients. Assessment in the Counselling Practice Module will involve a supervisor's report plus a trainee self-assessment of their counselling development. The Further Personal and Professional Development (FPPD) module will require a reflective essay of 2000 words which describes how the module has enabled you to integrate and internalise key issues in your personal journey towards becoming a psychodynamic counsellor, how it is reflected in your client work, and more widely on your understanding of organisational and cultural relationships.

Award of the Diploma.

An Assessment Panel meets at the end of each academic year. This is attended by an external examiner (BPC), an objective practitioner who has worked in training, the Diploma Course Lead, and a Clinical Service Manager. On successful completion of all criteria, including attendance, assessments on theoretical understanding, personal and professional development, supervision reports on clinical practice, 200 hours of supervised client work, and administrative practice within the GCS clinical service, trainees are awarded the Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling.

Following this graduates are invited to consider a pathway into a post graduate year at GCS, which helps transition from being a trainee into working for an organisation, and/or in private practice. During this time trainees are supported to become accredited counsellors, as well as attending bespoke workshops to consolidate and further their learning post qualification.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ABSENCES DURING TRAINING

Trainees are expected to attend at least 80% of the sessions. Prolonged absence due to illness or for other reasons may necessitate a trainee repeating a year or withdrawing from the course.

TRAINING STAFF

All training staff on the course are qualified, accredited, practising, and experienced psychodynamic counsellors or psychotherapists. Their range of experience and theoretical background enables the trainees to gain a broad foundation for their counselling work.

Pastoral Tutors and Study Skills Advisors are also available to support you through your training. The Training Department includes the Diploma Course Lead, and training admin staff. The department is there to support you through your training journey, offering IT support, general support, and guidance with any issues or concerns regarding the Diploma.

The Clinical Service at GCS includes Clinical Service Managers (CSMs), who in turn are supported by a team of frontline staff who manage the counselling and client work. The CSMs liaise with the Diploma Course Lead, and Training Supervisors, to ensure the best possible experience of working within a counselling organisation, and your work with clients.

POST-QUALIFICATION ACCREDITATION

Most organisations such as BACP and BPC that offer individual accreditation to counsellors require a certain amount of post-graduate practice (and in some cases, CPD) before granting accreditation. Many graduates of our programme have, after completing these post-graduate requirements, successfully applied for accreditation. Our post-graduate Associate Counsellor Programme is intended to support qualified counsellors who are preparing for accreditation.

Please contact us for further information on accreditation or refer directly to accrediting bodies for their full requirements.

PERSONAL THERAPY

This course deals with a wide range of human problems, includes working with clients and involves much self-reflection and understanding. These activities will all touch the trainee's own difficult experiences and challenge deeply held personal beliefs and attitudes.

For this reason, personal therapy with an approved therapist is required for the duration of the course and for at least three months before trainees begin to work with clients.

The GCS Training Department will provide a register of approved therapists and a helpful guide to finding a therapist. It is important that the theoretical orientation of a trainee's therapist is congruent with the training.

The cost of the therapy is additional to the cost of the course.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

GCS offers a series of seminars and experiential explorations of counselling ideas and issues given by therapists of wide experience and different backgrounds.

Evidence of CPD is generally required by accrediting organisations such as BPC and BACP. For this reason, and to instil in trainees a culture of good practice, 15 hours CPD per year is a mandatory requirement of the Diploma.

The cost of CPD is in addition to the course fee.

PASTORAL TUTOR

GCS provides a supportive and caring environment in which to train. As well as your personal therapist trainees have access to a Pastoral Tutor who does not take part in the teaching elements of the course but is responsible for providing pastoral care for the trainees. Trainees are encouraged to use this support.

ACADEMIC TUTOR

Trainees are invited to attend one tutorial with their theory seminar tutor twice a year, and further learning support is available from our Study Skills Advisors.

PRACTICALITIES

BOOKS AND READING

Specialist reading lists will be provided by individual Seminar Leaders and trainees will be required to purchase some books; this is kept to a minimum. To support trainees with relevant and specialist material, GCS has developed a reasonable library of books.

Trainees have access to this library facility but are required to adhere to the procedures when borrowing books and to ensure books are returned. Lost or non-returned books will be charged for.

DISTRIBUTION OF COURSE PAPERS

All course material, including papers and readings, will be made available through the GCS online library. Papers and readings will not be distributed in paper form as a matter of course, and trainees are responsible for their own printing.

If you do require course papers to be printed, an administration and printing charge will be made. These charges are available on request.

COUNSELLING PLACEMENT

Our trainees are 'in placement' with the clinical service at GCS. At the beginning of training a Counsellor's Handbook giving details of the counselling service, processes and procedures, will be issued to trainees before they begin counselling. The first term of the CPM module is direct face to face teaching on all aspects of beginning clinical practice with GCS. In small supervision groups Trainees are further supported to begin clinical practice and there are several checks before a Trainee can begin this work, including a supervisor formally advising the clinical service that their supervisee is ready to see clients, that mandatory training has taken place, and that a DBS check has been carried out.

Trainees are required to have been in personal therapy for at least three months before beginning client work. Before meeting with clients, Trainees are asked to sign a 'Placement Contract' which clearly outlines GCS's responsibilities to the trainee counsellor, as well as stating the trainee's responsibilities in clinical practice.

DBS CHECK

A DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) check is required before a counselling service placement is offered. The cost of the check is included in the course fee.

IT EQUIPMENT AND GCS IT SYSTEM

In addition to the online library that is used for the distribution of course material, our secure internal email system is used for communications regarding your assessed work (such as essays), counselling placement and other service matters. GCS's IT systems are built on the Microsoft Office 365 platform. You will be given an Office 365 user account and your computer should be capable of running this platform.

It is important for your studies with us that you have access to IT, email and printing facilities. Please speak to us if this will be difficult for you in order that we know what further support to offer you.

APPLICATION, SELECTION & FEES

FEES

Application and selection fee: £140.

The course fee for 2023-24 is £3150. The fee remains the same for each year of the course, but is subject to a CPI or 2% annual increase, whichever is the greater.

Course fees can be paid by termly instalments, and details of payment options will be sent to you if you are offered a place on the course.

APPLICATIONS

Applications should be sent in the form described at the end of this booklet to the Training Office at GCS (training@gloscounselling.org.uk).

SELECTION CRITERIA

At the time of making the initial application applicants must:

- Have successfully completed, or be about to complete, a foundation course in counselling skills (i.e. Certificate in Counselling Skills) of not less than one year's duration. Trainees may have undertaken the skills training with GCS or have completed a training elsewhere which meets similar criteria.
- Be personally suitable to train as therapists and to work with clients at GCS.
- Have the potential to work at Diploma level.

SELECTION PROCESS

Applicants for the programme attend two interviews: a formal in-depth interview by an External Assessor and a preliminary interview by a senior member of GCS. A charge is made to cover the cost of these interviews.

The therapeutic interview aims to assess the applicant's psychological stability, their capacity for drawing on personal resources, and the capacity to undertake an emotionally, intellectually and academically demanding course.

The 'practical' interview seeks to establish if the applicant has a realistic understanding of the demands of the course, the time commitment, financial implications, their views on difference and diversity, their thoughts on working with clients, and their readiness to undertake personal therapy.

Your application and the reports from the interviews are considered by an Assessment Panel before an offer is made.

CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE:

- On accepting an offer of a place on the programme the trainee will be required to pay a registration fee of £400 which is a non-returnable deposit deducted from the course fee.
- The balance is payable either in full at the start of the course, or in three termly payments, payable at the beginning of each term for which a £35 surcharge will be added. Trainees are responsible for setting up a standing order if paying by bank transfer. Full details will be provided.
- 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 programme 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 Head of Training 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.
- Trainees accepted for the programme will be required to be in personal therapy with a therapist approved by GCS for the full duration of the course.
- Offers of a place on the Diploma will be made subject to a satisfactory DBS check.

WAIVERS

- GCS reserves the right to cancel a Diploma programme at any time if there are insufficient numbers of trainees to make the course viable.
- GCS may have to adapt to government guidelines in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic – in this instance timetabling changes may occur to facilitate social distancing and / or remote working.
- GCS reserves the right to terminate or extend the training agreement with a trainee in the event of the trainee not meeting the requirements of the Diploma programme and/or those of GCS.
- GCS reserves the right to refuse the offer of a place on the Diploma programme
- GCS operates a Complaints Policy. Complaints should be in writing addressed to the Chief Executive and will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Procedure, a copy of which is available on request.
- GCS operates an Appeals Policy. A trainee accepted onto the Diploma course wishing to appeal against a training decision during their training should put this in writing addressed to the Chief Executive and it will be dealt with in accordance with the Appeals Procedure, a copy of which is available on request.

APPLICATION FORM

Please transpose the following information onto a separate word document or PDF and send to training@gloscounselling.org.uk along with a good quality passport style photograph against a plain background.

SECTION A

Full Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Title).

Address, Telephone number (Home and work) and email address.

Date of Birth.

Academic and Professional Qualifications, including dates and institutions

Name & address of current employer.

Details of current employment. (If voluntary please be specific about the nature and extent of your work).

Details of previous work experience.

Relevant courses attended. Please be specific about any counselling skills courses.

A brief description of any counselling work, paid or voluntary undertaken.

The names, addresses and emails of two referees who would be able to comment on your suitability for the course; one known to you personally (but not a family member) and one who knows you in your work.

SECTION B.

If you have received personal counselling, psychotherapy, analysis or any sort of psychiatric help at any time in your life, please indicate:

- The duration, with dates
- Frequency
- The model of therapy and style of work (e.g. group, individual, family, marital. Psychodynamic, Jungian, Gestalt, Behavioural etc.)
- The name of your counsellor / therapist / analyst / psychiatrist and the professional body to which he/she belongs. NB - we do not consult your therapist without your permission and we do not require any sort of reference from them.

Details of any previous involvement with GCS (except for the training courses listed in section A), and any personal connections you may have with GCS staff or trainees.

Reasons for your application, what has led you to make this application and describe any previous experience in a helping role / profession.

Please give an account of the significant experiences in your life and say how you feel about them.

Any circumstances in your current personal situation, which you would like GCS to know about.

Please detail any specific support you feel you may need: for example in working with IT equipment or study skills. GCS welcomes applications from potential trainees with learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Learning support is available from our Study Skills Advisors.