



CERTIFICATE IN COUNSELLING SKILLS INTENSIVE

TRAINEE HANDBOOK

COURSE PROVIDER



Contents

Page 3	About GCS Training
Pages 4/5	Course Details
Page 6	Seminars
Page 7	Assessment Procedures
Page 8	Course journal and reading list
Page 9	Support for Trainees
Page 10	Training Venues
Page 11	Directions
Page 12/13	Course Dates and Fees
Page 14	Other matters
Page 15	Personal Details and Emergency Contacts



ABOUT GCS TRAINING

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:

- To provide high quality professional counselling at affordable cost to the community of Gloucestershire and its surrounds.
- 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.

Registered Charity No. 1109904 Company No. 4754643

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COURSE DETAILS

WHO IS THE COURSE FOR?

The intensive certificate provides a valuable basic training in counselling, particularly 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 course 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 18 days spread over 7 weekend & long weekend sessions.

ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS

At the end of the year a Certificate in Counselling Skills is awarded, subject to satisfactory assessment. This certificate is evidence of competence in basic counselling skills and is an essential entry requirement to the Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling at GCS, 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. The certificate is not a licence to practice as a counsellor.

TEACHING MATERIAL

All handouts and teaching material will be emailed to you the day before your seminars by the training team, we ask that you print these off or bring an electronic device to access them during the seminars.

SEMINARS AND EXPERIENTIAL GROUP

Seminars are delivered by qualified and experienced counsellors and group facilitators. Each session provides a blend of core theory, skills development, and practice counselling sessions.

The experiential group provides an environment for the development of self-awareness through interaction with others within that group. The purpose of the group 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.

The seminars and roleplays help you develop and apply listening skills and create a sound working alliance. The self-awareness and group sessions offer an unstructured space to develop self-awareness, awareness of others and to recognise and articulate your feelings.

The course emphasises reflection, giving and receiving feedback, challenge as well as open and constructive dialogue.

SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

Attendance is required at these workshops. These are included in the term dates listed here and are not additional days.

The format of these workshops will be different from your usual timetable with us.

The Saturday workshops are an integral part of the course and focus on improving counselling skills and offer the opportunity to meet with trainees on 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.



INDICATIVE SEMINAR CONTENT

MODULE 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

MODULE 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

MODULE 3

- Further issues of adult life and the application of counselling skills:
- Mid-life
- Old age and death
- Loss and mourning
- Projections and challenging
- How should counsellors and listeners look after themselves?
- Sexuality
- Couples and Families
- Endings and ending the counselling relationship
- Counselling skills practice



ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The Certificate in Counselling Skills is awarded through a combination of; attendance and the submission of written work that meets the standards expected for studying at this level.

The Certificate in Counselling Skills are awarded in July of the year that the course is completed within. Those who are successfully awarded will be invited to join their peers at an Awards evening (date TBC) held in Stroud. The Training Department will inform you of the outcome of your award during the final weeks of the course, by email.

- Confirmation of satisfactory attendance.

Attendance registers are taken at each session. It is required that trainees attend a minimum of 80% of the sessions. A session consists of both the seminar and experiential group. Please note the Saturday workshops count as 2 sessions.

At GCS we are aware that the demands of life may mean you cannot attend therefore we ask that each trainee takes responsibility for their own attendance and notifies training by email as soon as they know they will be unable to attend a session.

- Submission of written work.

Each trainee will be required to write two short essays; 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. Those whose written work does not meet the criteria will be given a chance to speak with their seminar tutor and resubmit their written work.

A composite image featuring a close-up of a smiling person's face at the top and a hand holding a pen, writing in a notebook at the bottom. The notebook is open, and the hand is positioned over the left page.

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 during the 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 (subject to Covid restrictions) and each course group has a book box available for this purpose. Evidence of relevant reading will be of value in constructing your essays.

A record sheet of the books lent will be available to be filled in. Books should not be borrowed for more than two weeks 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. Certificates will not be issued if books have not been handed back.



SUPPORT FOR TRAINEES

THE COURSE TEAM

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

Group facilitators are responsible for the experiential group work. They are accredited and 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 to the material being taught, please speak your seminar tutor if you would like to make an appointment with a pastoral tutor.

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 planning on applying for the Diploma Course need to be with an approved therapist that meets certain criteria for the training. A list of approved therapists is available.

OFFICE SUPPORT

For all practical course enquiries please contact:

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 food or hot drinks 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 the course will be informed of the entry code at the first session. This code is changed periodically.
- 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.



LOCATION

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

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 & FEES

Costs

Deposit: £249

Course fee (including deposit) for the year 2025: £1749

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 or monthly payments by Standing Order (including a £45 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.



COURSE DATES 2025

Saturday 18th Jan - Induction 10.00-12.00

Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th January

Friday 7th, Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th Feb

Friday 7th, Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th March

Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th April

Friday 16th, Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th May

Friday 13th, Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th June

Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th July

Thursday 10th July – Awards Evening

OTHER MATTERS

IT EQUIPMENT

GCS operates an entirely paperless distribution of documentation. We use email to communicate with trainees and share training material. It is therefore important that you have access to IT, email and printing facilities, if you do not then please speak with someone in training.

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

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.