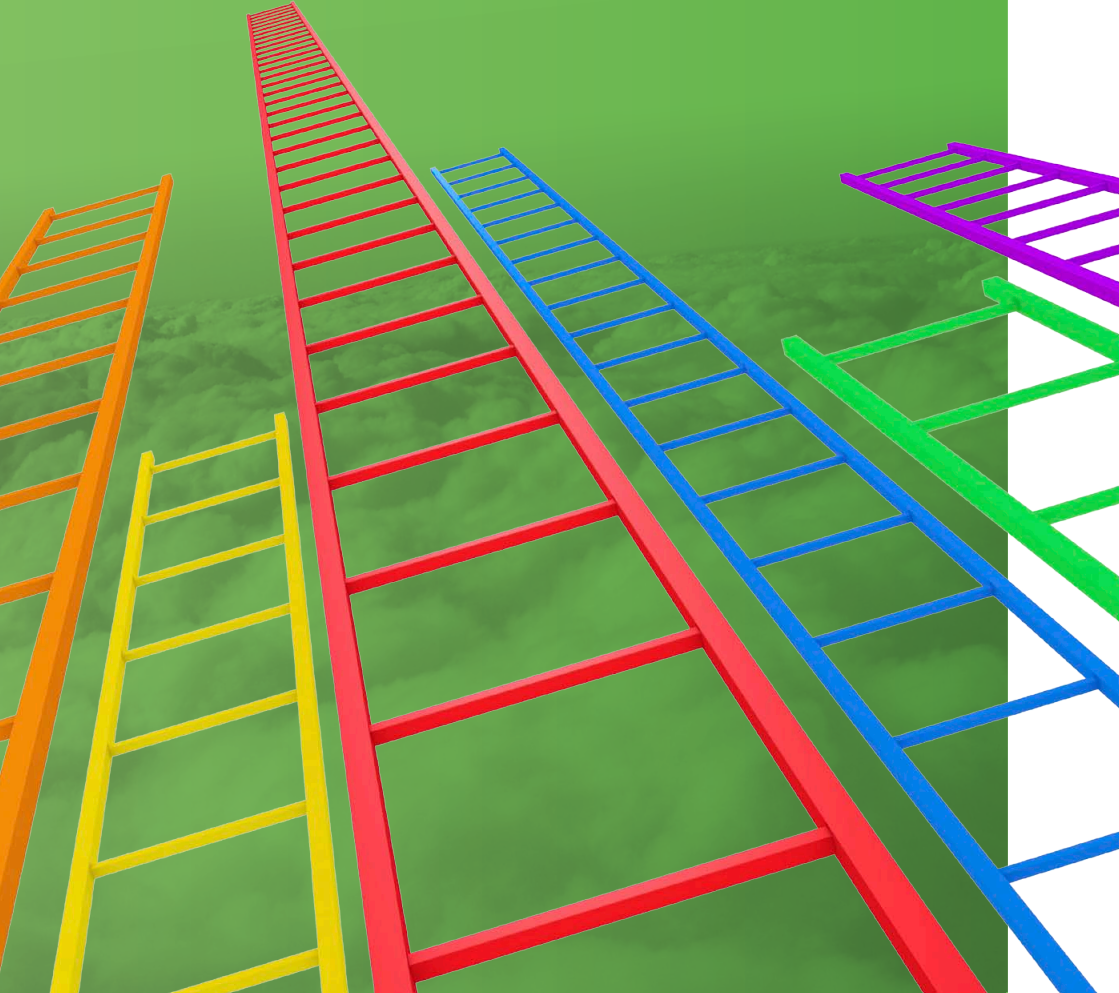


Supporting you at each
step of your journey

bacp

British Association for
Counselling & Psychotherapy

Essential information for students



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Welcome

Thank you for requesting information regarding becoming a student member of the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP).

We hope the information contained in this booklet will give you an insight into how membership of BACP can be of benefit to you during your counselling and psychotherapy training.

To join us and be part of the largest professional body in Europe for counselling and psychotherapy simply complete our 'invitation to student membership' application pack.

When can I join BACP?

BACP's Student Membership category is available to you if you are undertaking classroom tuition on a counselling/ psychotherapy course of at least one

year full time or two years part time which includes a supervised placement as an integral part of the course. The earlier you join BACP the sooner you can start to use the benefits and services that membership provides.

Why should I join BACP?

Membership of BACP has numerous features which will guide and inform you through your studies; some of which are detailed overpage. Should you have any further questions please contact us on 01455 883300 or email bacp@bacp.co.uk.

continued overpage



Why should I join BACP?

Therapy today

As part of BACP membership you will receive our professional magazine *Therapy Today* which will help you stay informed on current practice methods and issues within the psychological therapies field. It offers readers insight into a broad range of therapy related subjects, up to date thinking in the field, current research development and topical national and international news.



Information sheets

As a student member of BACP you will be able to access for free, further guidance on specific areas of counselling and psychotherapy contained in our information sheets. Access is available to BACP members through our dedicated members' website area.



Trainee placements

As the demand for a placement far exceeds availability, a database has been created specifically to help BACP student members find a placement. Student members can request details of placements within their local area from the database which contains approximately 500 organisations looking for trainees.

Ethical Framework

Knowing that you adhere to the BACP *Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling & Psychotherapy* will give you guidance in your practice. The Ethical Framework is of significant importance for the protection of the public, the reputation of the Association and in upholding standards of practice within the profession.



www.bacp.co.uk/student

New to BACP's website is a section for students who are either looking to start training, are currently training, or have recently graduated. Through the student web pages you will be able to gather information and resources that will assist you with your training or career. Also, as a student member you will be able to ask for advice and guidance from fellow students via the online forum; accessible to members only.

Careers in counselling

Counselling is often taken up as a second career. As a result people are frequently working and training at the same time. For this reason, most courses are part-time, usually in the evening or day release.

The desire to become a counsellor develops frequently from some aspect of a person's original career. These careers have the welfare of others at heart; for example, nursing, teaching, social and support work. This work naturally benefits from training in counselling skills but may lead to a change to a career as a counsellor.

Paid employment opportunities

While the number of opportunities for paid employment in the counselling field is increasing, this by no means meets the demand from those who are professionally trained and many of these positions are part-time. BACP produces JobsOnline, which is available in the members' section of its website, in which counselling and counselling skills vacancies are listed.

Other publications which advertise similar vacancies:

- Guardian (Tuesdays & Wednesdays)
- Times Higher Supplement (weekly)
- Community Care (weekly)
- Nursing Times (weekly)

Counsellor vacancies may be in a variety of settings, such as schools; further

and higher education; organisations for people with disabilities, in the workplace; youth work; for alcohol, drugs and AIDS agencies; General Practice and other general counselling services.

Many telephone helplines are staffed by people trained in listening and counselling skills and some counsellors are now offering counselling by telephone when a 'session' will be contracted between the counsellor and client, though this technique requires special training.

Counsellors in these jobs will expect to be dealing with a wide range of presenting problems. Frequently, full time posts are advertised where the counsellor is required to fill a dual role as counsellor and teacher, welfare and advice worker, co-ordinator and nurse.

Voluntary employment opportunities

There is much scope for voluntary work in counselling. Agencies like Relate (relationship counselling), Cruse (bereavement), Phobic Action and many others select and train volunteers for counselling work within their organisations. However, such agencies will expect a commitment from you over several years. It is useful to have basic counselling skills training before offering your services. People gain valuable experience in these roles and may move on from voluntary positions to further training and paid work.

What you need to become a counsellor

Competence in the practice of counselling skills, counselling, or psychotherapy depends on the following:

- Knowledge of theory
- Grasp of practical skills
- Specific personal qualities

A number of different activities contribute to the development of the above:

- Training courses
- Experience in 'client contact' situations
- Supervision (reviewing what you have covered during client contact with a more experienced practitioner or your peers)
- Personal therapy (with you as the client – whether one to one or in a group)

Private practice

Ideally, a counsellor in private practice should have substantial training and experience. As waiting lists for free or low cost counselling grow and the general public becomes more aware of the benefits of counselling, private practitioners are more in demand. This private work can combine neatly with part-time or voluntary work.

Supervision

All members of BACP who are practising counsellors must be in ongoing supervision (consultative support). Supervisors' details can be found on the BACP website under 'Find a Supervisor'.

BACP produces an information sheet titled 'Training and careers' which can be viewed through the members' area of our website, or purchased for £3 by non-members.

Alternatively you may find our student website helpful at www.bacp.co.uk/student.



What if I want to be a voluntary counsellor?

There is no reason to suppose that a volunteer counsellor does not need to be as qualified as a paid one.

Some voluntary organisations such as Relate (relationship) and Cruse (bereavement) select and train their own volunteers but they will expect a commitment from you over several years. It is useful to have basic counselling skills training before offering your services.

A lot of voluntary organisations need volunteers who can use counselling skills but, if they are looking for someone to offer counselling, a properly trained counsellor would be required. However, voluntary counselling services often provide placements for trainees in which case clients should be told that their therapist was a trainee and that it might be necessary to refer on clients who need a higher level of skill than that of the trainee.

Where can I volunteer?

Sometimes volunteering can be a useful experience for prospective therapists, even if the organisation is unable to offer contracted counselling experience. The following organisations produce leaflets and a resource pack on various aspects of volunteering:

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street,
London N1 9RL

telephone 020 7713 6161

website www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

The National Centre for Volunteering

Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street,
London NR1 9RL

telephone 020 7520 8900

website www.volunteering.org.uk

Finding a suitable placement

It is essential that full counsellor and psychotherapy training courses include a substantial amount of supervised counselling practice with *real* clients.

This should be a minimum of 100 hours of counselling (however BACP accredited course requirements are for 150 hours) – excluding missed sessions – within which students


should have the experience of making/maintaining and terminating counselling and psychotherapy contracts. Training organisations should take responsibility for assessing students individually for their 'readiness' to take clients.

As part of our services to student members we have a placement database from which you can request details of placements within your area.

Guidance for trainee placements

The following information is edited from BACP's information sheet T3 'Guidance for trainee placements'.

Information sheet T3



Further details regarding the on going agreement between trainee, agency and course, on the complete information sheet, can be viewed via the member's area of our website, or can be purchased for £3 by non-members.

Two fundamental ethical principles govern the gaining of counselling experience. The first is the safety of both clients and trainees. The second is that the needs of clients are paramount. Should there, for example, arise a conflict of interest in relation to more narrowly defined training needs, such as the number of counselling hours required, or that the client work should demonstrate a particular area of theory, this needs to be borne in mind.

It is not good practice for inexperienced trainees to gain their client counselling experience through private/independent practice. Trainees will, therefore, normally need a placement in a reputable agency that offers a counselling service. Such placements are in considerable demand and, under the financial and other pressures of training, it is understandable that trainees are sometimes tempted to settle for the first available placement without really checking that it is appropriate for their particular circumstances or training course. At the very least this can undermine the effectiveness and enjoyment of a trainee's training experience; at worst the placement becomes an unsafe experience for both trainees and clients.

Trainees should allow time for the process of finding a placement; they will need also to realise that, even within an otherwise suitable placement, the supply of appropriate client work, or their own progress towards competence, cannot be certain or completely predictable. They are advised to allow, in their financial and other planning, for at least the possibility of having to extend the training period in order to complete the required number of practice hours and to achieve the necessary level of competence.

Kinds of placement agency

Some agencies are well used to having trainees and may have come to rely on them. Nevertheless it is important that the special needs of trainees, in relation to case load, kind of client and appropriate managerial and other support are fully recognised and taken into account. Pre-assessment of clients as being suitable for trainees is desirable whenever possible, though this may present difficulties in respect of some theoretical orientations. Some placements, such as those in medical and some educational settings, may not be suitable for inexperienced trainees; for these BACP's specialist divisions have produced separate guidelines which both agencies and potential trainees are advised to consult in advance of trying to negotiate a placement.

It is important to establish from the start that an agency can provide formal counselling contracts as distinct from opportunities to use counselling skills. It is also important

to ascertain whether the agency has any specific requirements or practices, such as a limit on the number of sessions that may be offered, and, if so, to check whether these are compatible with the requirements of the training course or the accreditation scheme of a professional body.

Some agencies specialise in a particular kind of work, or work with a specific range of clients (e.g. young people), or clients with specific presenting problem(s), for example bereavement. Such placement opportunities are often very valuable, but where they have imposed some limitation on an individual trainee's experience, it is important that this is recognised. An automatic generalisation to other kinds of work and clients should not be assumed and needs for further experience and training should be identified.

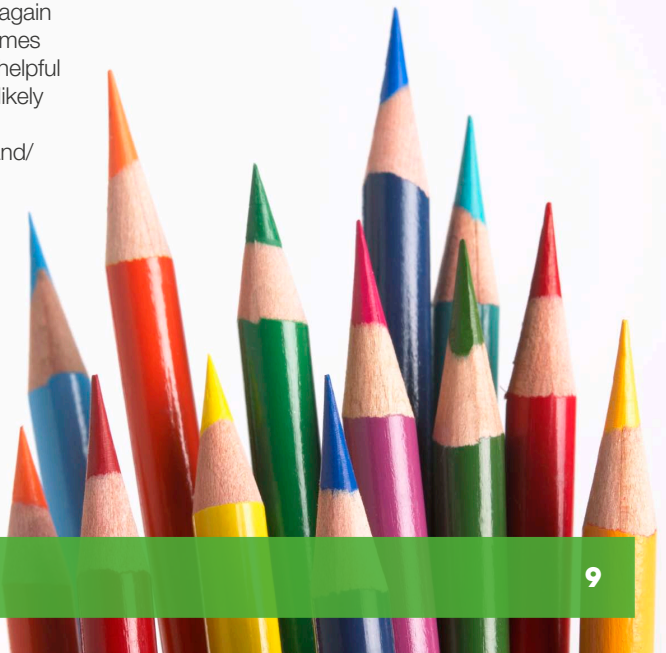
The issue of theoretical orientation can be more problematic. It is important that the orientation of the agency is compatible with that of a training course, but opinions vary as to whether this implies that the orientations should actually be identical or whether some difference can be helpfully stimulating and challenging, particularly for more experienced trainees. The needs of clients are again paramount, and if challenge becomes confusion and conflict, this is not helpful and needs to be avoided, for it is likely to 'spill over' into the actual client work. Where the training course and/or the agency are committed to and work from a single and particular theoretical model it will be important that it is the same model.

In any case the training course management should take responsibility for approving the placement as appropriate for the particular course. As part of this process they

should provide the agency with a written description of the course including its orientation and requirements for client work and assessment. The agency should agree in writing that these are congruent with its aims, procedures and resources.

Training courses should also take responsibility for assessing trainees individually for their readiness to begin client work, though many agencies are likely to have their own selection requirements and procedure. At the least, a reciprocal interview between trainee and agency is indicated; where possible it is also helpful for potential trainees to be given the opportunity to talk to those currently or formerly on the placement.

It should be noted that this Information Sheet offers broad guidance, which sets out industrial good practice, but it should not be substituted for legal and for other professional advice applicable to your particular circumstances.



Funding for counselling training

BACP has compiled suggestions of where you may be able to obtain funding for your studies.

Below are just some of the organisations that may be able to assist you; with the full information sheet being available for free from BACP.

Hoxter Educational Bursaries

website www.bacp.co.uk/information/education/bursaries.php
telephone 01455 883382
email sam.newman@bacp.co.uk

The British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy, through its Hoxter Educational Bursaries, aims to assist those people on low income to pay for counsellor training. Additionally, attention is given to people offering counselling to disadvantaged or under-represented groups in society.

Bursaries are only available to those undertaking BACP accredited courses. Applications must be received no later than 31 July each year and must be accompanied with proof of acceptance onto a BACP accredited course, along with supporting documents providing evidence of financial needs.

Career Development Loans

website www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/CareerDevelopmentLoans/index.htm
helpline 0800 100 900
lines open 7 days a week 8am–10pm

Between £300 and £10,000 available to borrow to help fund up to two years of learning (or up to three years if the course includes one year of relevant practical experience). Career development loans can be applied for through participating banks. The Learning and Skills Council pays the interest on the loan whilst learning and for one month after the end of studying. The loan is then repaid to the bank over an agreed period at a fixed rate of interest.

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

website www.esrc.ac.uk
telephone 01793 867125
email grantsesrc@ssc.rcuk.ac.uk
address Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UJ.

The ESRC provide a range of grants which are detailed on their website.

Secondment by employer

People who are seconded take the majority of places on full-time courses on full salary. Course fees are usually paid by the employer and sometimes travelling and accommodation allowances as well. Local Education Authorities second the largest number of students. Teachers intending to apply for secondment need to ascertain their

LEA's policy about conditions, eligibility and courses favoured. Other employers in the public and private sectors may consider paying the fees for an employee to undertake a part-time course, if the employee can show that the course would be of benefit in his/her work.

Discretionary Learner Support

website www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/DG_10033131

Discretionary Learner Support is available in colleges and sixth form colleges to help with learning costs if you are aged 19 or over.

The funds are prioritised for those who face financial hardship. They can be used to help with: financial hardship and emergencies, childcare costs (for Ofsted-registered childcare), accommodation costs, for those who have to study further than the maximum distance from home, essential course-related equipment, materials and field trip, travel costs.

Colleges will take into account whether there are alternative sources of help available.

Student Finance England

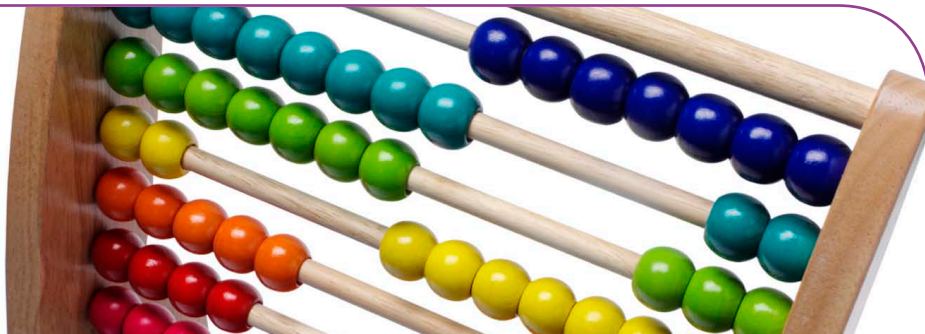
website www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/index.htm
telephone 0845 300 5090
minicom 0845 604 4434
lines open Monday to Friday 8am-8pm/
Saturday & Sunday 9am-5.30pm
address PO Box 210, Darlington, DL1 9HJ

Information and help with regard to sources of government-funded help for full-time and part time courses. For those on lower income wishing to study as part-time students, funds include: A tuition fee loan to help with tuition fees and Course Grant to help with study costs, such as books, materials and travel.

Family Action – Educational Grants Advisory Service

website www.family-action.org.uk
telephone Grants Service: 020 7241 7459
lines open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
address 501-505 Kingsland Road,
London, E8 4AU

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Part of Family Action, applicants must be studying at a college or university that is affiliated to EGAS. Grants are in the main targeted at families and individuals on low incomes, particularly those living on benefits. Preference is given to people studying courses that are likely to lead to their improved employment prospects.

Student Awards Agency for Scotland

website www.saas.gov.uk
telephone 0300 555 0505
lines open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm (Fridays 4.30pm)
address Gyleview House, 3 Redheughs Rigg, Edinburgh, EH12 9HH

The Students Awards Agency for Scotland funds Scottish students taking higher education courses anywhere in the UK.

The Directory of Grant Making Trusts

A publication listing a wide range of bursaries available in the United Kingdom for all types of qualifications.

It is available at local libraries (usually only available as a reference book).

This list has been compiled by the BACP Information Office from a variety of sources and is offered as a service for members and the public. Inclusion does not mean that an organisation is recognised or recommended by BACP.

Case study writing

This article appears in full on the student pages of BACP's website. The complete article describes the planning and structuring of your work; the history and development of a problem; assessment; and writing up the case study.

Mary Parker offers a practical approach to case study writing:

Throughout our counselling careers we are asked to write case studies for varying purposes. The most common of these is for examination of our professional competence. This may be for training or accreditation purposes. There are even people who write case studies for their own pleasure! As a supervisor I ask my supervisees to write one case study a year as part of their professional development.

“ The principal purpose of writing a case study is to demonstrate how we integrate theoretical understanding into our counselling practice. ”

The principal purpose of writing a case study is to demonstrate how we integrate theoretical understanding into our counselling practice. We aim to convince

assessors that we know what we are doing in our counselling work. Many counsellors and counselling students find writing a case study a challenging task.

If a case study is to be effective it needs to reflect the application of core theory and philosophy of counselling. Some assessors require that the 'Theory and Philosophy of Counselling' is submitted as a separate piece of writing.

It is a good idea to begin with this task. Once you have done so you can move on to evaluate how your counselling method, interventions, and client responses, match with your theory and philosophy. One way to get started is to think of your 'philosophy and method of counselling' as your personal 'theory of change'. Useful questions to ask are: what is my idea of a healthy person? What causes a person to become distressed/disturbed? Why have I chosen a particular theoretical model above others? How does my model help people to change and what is my part in the process?

By completing your 'theory and philosophy of counselling' you have a foundation from which to understand the counselling process. You are then ready to move on to thinking about writing a case study.

It may then help if you divide the task into three main stages:

- preparation
- writing up the case study
- checking, correcting and improving your work.

“ One way to get started is to think of your 'philosophy and method of counselling' as your personal 'theory of change' . ”

Preparation

Good preparation is the key to success. Firstly, you need to establish exactly what is required of you.

You do this by:

- studying the criteria and deciding how best to meet the requirements
- identifying a suitable case
- planning and structuring your work.

About the author

Mary Parker has been in practice for 20 years. She has an MSc in Psychological Counselling and is registered with AHPP and UKCP. She is a course consultant and external moderator.

She is a BACP Recognised Supervisor and has a large supervision practice. She runs workshops on case study writing, note taking and assessment for individuals, agencies, social work and diploma courses.



The role of group work in counsellor training

This article appears in full on the student pages of BACP's website and gives more information on the role of group work and the ethical issues.

Judi Irving and David Williams look at the role of group work in counsellor training:

Group work is usually seen as an integral and essential part of counsellor training. It is our contention that trainers are often not clear as to the aims and objectives of this work, or, if they are, do not make them explicit. The result may be ineffective training and individual harm to trainees. Making group work mandatory also raises dilemmas.

The overall aims of group work have to do with personal growth and development, encouraging enquiry into personal behavioural style and providing participants with an opportunity to gain insights and awareness of the impact of their own behaviours and how they are viewed by others, together with an increasing sensitivity to what others are feeling (Taylor, 1981). The assumption within counsellor training appears to be that all trainees can and should experience personal growth and development as a result of participating in group work; if they do not, it is considered to be a failing on the part of the trainee to make use effectively of this opportunity for learning. However, different kinds of groups offer different kinds of learning experiences, and even within a particular kind of group the learning experiences of individuals will vary considerably.

It is somewhat naive of trainers to assume that the simple provision of the experience of group work is both a necessary and sufficient condition for personal development. At the very least, facilitators need to be clear about the kind of group work offered and the needs and characteristics of the participants.

“Trainers also need to be aware of the impact that the uniqueness of each participant has on the functioning of the group as a whole.”

There are many types of groups. Lieberman, Yalom and Miles (1973) looked at 10 basic types and found that each had its own merits in enabling particular aspects of personal development. Taylor (1981) classified groups not by technique but by focus and approach, for example whether the focus was the self or the group and whether the approach was personal growth or structured training. Our impression from talking with trainers and examining course prospectuses is that few courses appear to categorise their group work in either of these schemes. Often the vague expression, 'doing group', covers whatever unstructured activity is going on. It is evident that this is no basis for an

adequate training programme in terms of both training requirements and safety.

“ The overall aims of group work have to do with personal growth and development, encouraging enquiry into personal behavioural style and providing participants with an opportunity to gain insights and awareness of the impact of their own behaviours and how they are viewed by others, together with an increasing sensitivity to what others are feeling (Taylor, 1981). ”

Trainers also need to be aware of the impact that the uniqueness of each participant has on the functioning of the group as a whole. Each of us develops our own ways of resolving the conflict in achieving a balance between needs for intimacy and needs for autonomy. For some individuals, the group situation may be perceived as an opportunity to experience and work with their own

needs for intimacy without feeling that their autonomy is being threatened.

For others, this situation may be perceived not as an opportunity but as an environment in which they feel they are ‘between a rock and a hard place’. They feel they must either conform to group norms in terms of openness and intimacy or risk rejection by the group. Intimacy and openness are perceived as being required of them and not a matter of autonomous choice.

As a result, some will appear to conform without really getting involved, that is, they learn to ‘play the game’ and so lose hope of learning from this experience. Yet others, who do not get involved, who do not play the game, are candidates for becoming victims of the group. Thus trainers need to be alert to the necessity to intervene, to support and protect those who may be damaged by the experience.

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Ethical issues

There is an important ethical dilemma in including personal development group work as a component of counsellor training programmes. This is related to the concept of informed consent in that prospective trainees need to be aware not only of the fact that personal development group work is a component of the course for which they are applying but also of all that this entails.

The problem lies in the fact that once a commitment has been made to undertake a course, to defect from the group work part of it is not a realistic option. From the course perspective, such an individual would not have completed the requirements of the training programme.

From the personal perspective, a student is likely to experience pressure from staff and other students to persevere. Whatever the extent of pre-course information provided, and however applicants are screened, there is a sense in which participation in group work is forced.

About the author

Judi Irving is a Lecturer in Psychology and Counselling. David Williams is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Counselling. Both are at the Dept of Psychology, University of Hull. Correspondence address: Dept of Psychology, Counsellor Training Unit, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX.

Essential information for students

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