

COUNSELLOR

Counsellors work with clients experiencing a wide range of emotional and psychological difficulties to help them bring about effective change, and/ or enhance their well-being. Presenting issues include depression, anxiety, stress, loss and relationship difficulties that affect an individual's ability to manage life. There are a wide variety of underpinning theoretical models and approaches (e.g. humanistic, psychodynamic, person-centred, cognitive-behavioural), but evidence shows that establishing a good therapeutic relationship which focusses on the client's needs and which understand the client's world view leads to good outcomes. These common factors are more important than the theoretical approach the counsellor is trained in.

Counsellors work in a wide range of contexts and at different levels. They may also have professional affiliations which means they also identify as psychotherapists. Within the NHS, counsellors work in formally contracted improving access to psychological therapies (IAPT) services as part of multi-disciplinary teams. They also work in non-IAPT services, such as primary care counselling or in locally commissioned agencies fulfilling local needs.

Some counsellors specialise in working with particular client groups (e.g. children and young people, older people, couples or families), or with particular issues e.g. sexual violence or abuse, bereavement and loss, relationship and emotional difficulties, addictions, low self-esteem, or stress, which affect an individual's psychological health and well-being.

WHO CAN TRAIN FOR THIS ROLE?

- Non-Graduate
- Psychology Graduate
- Other Graduate
- Other Mental Health Professional



REQUIRED TRAINING FOR THIS ROLE

Although there's no single compulsory training required to become a counsellor, employers will expect an individual to have undertaken professional training and be a member of a recognised professional body as a minimum. Membership shows that you meet certain professional and educational standards and abide by a code of ethics. Many employers will expect professional body registration and/or accreditation.

To work directly in improving access to psychological therapies (IAPT) services, counsellors must have achieved individual accredited status with a recognised professional body and have undertaken an approved IAPT training. The approved IAPT trainings include: Counselling for Depression (CfD), Couple Therapy for Depression, Brief Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy (DIT) and Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Depression (IPT).

Counselling training is delivered in a variety of contexts including further education, higher education and private training institutes with different routes to professional registration. This encourages a broad and inclusive pool of therapists where life experience and interpersonal skills are valued alongside academic levels of achievement.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO TRAIN



QUALIFICATIONS

Counselling training takes place in different contexts and at different academic levels. The absolute minimum entry qualification is a vocational diploma at level 4 with the expectation of some prior training in counselling skills/theory. However, core practitioner training is also widely delivered at degree and master's levels depending on an individual's prior education and background, and some professional bodies have higher entry requirements. This allows diverse entry routes into the profession. It is important to ensure that your training meets professional body registration and accreditation requirements, which vary between different professional bodies. Initial

training includes an approved placement (minimum of 100 hours) with supervised client work, but some professional bodies have a higher range of requirements for professional registration.

EXPERIENCE



Whilst no specific experience is required prior to embarking on a core counselling training course, it is important to highlight some of the essential personal and professional qualities you might need as a practitioner and that courses may look for through their own individual application processes.

Trainees and practitioners would be expected to have an ability to interact with individuals in a sensitive, empathetic and non-judgmental manner as well as being able to form a therapeutic relationship. It is also important that someone possesses a strong sense of self-awareness and insight as well as honesty and the ability to work non-judgementally with difference and diversity.

SALARY EXPECTATIONS



Counsellors are employed at Band 6 and Band 7 on the NHS Agenda for Change pay scales depending on role, experience, and level of responsibility. Some counsellors progress to leadership positions across the full range of Agenda for Change pay up to Band 9.

FUTURE CAREER OPTIONS



Career progression in counselling is not linear. There are opportunities to add additional specialisms or engage in further training, as well as moving into roles as supervisors and clinical leads within multi-professional clinical teams.



REGISTERING OR ACCREDITING BODY

Counselling is not a regulated profession so there are no mandatory requirements for registration with a particular professional body, although the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) holds a list of accredited registers which have met minimum quality standards. A number of professional bodies, such as the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), the National Counselling Society (NCS), and the Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC) offer membership and registration and accreditation. You can find a list of professional accrediting bodies on the PSA website (see useful links). In order to work directly within IAPT (improving access to psychological therapies) services, you need to meet the registering/accrediting requirements for approved IAPT trainings listed in the current IAPT manual (see useful links).



PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION

There are a number of professional organisations for counsellors, including the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), the National Counselling Society (NCS) and the Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC).

Professional organisations have specific progression pathways to enhanced membership categories via registration and accreditation processes. These vary according to professional body requirements.



USEFUL LINKS

[READ MORE: NHS England - IAPT Manual](#)

[READ MORE: Health Careers NHS](#)

[READ MORE: Prospects Careers](#)

[READ MORE: BACP Training](#)

[READ MORE: National Counselling Society](#)

[READ MORE: British Psychoanalytic Council](#)

[READ MORE: UK Council for Psychotherapy](#)

[READ MORE: Professional Standards Authority](#)

[READ MORE: Pay scales - NHS Employers](#)

[READ MORE: NHS Jobs](#)

[READ MORE: Association of Christian Counsellors](#)