



Online & Telephone Counselling

Course Handbook



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Welcome

This course has been designed to give you the necessary skills and underpinning knowledge to practise safely and ethically, while also taking account of current pressures on your time and finances. We have worked intensively to provide an expert-designed and led online course, tailored not only to your learning needs but also to your budget.

In this handbook, you will find information that outlines various important aspects of the course. We intend that you can refer to it throughout your learning journey with us, to guide you on your way.



Who This Course Is For

- Qualified counsellors and psychotherapists
- Counselling students (Diploma Level) who are client facing or working towards placement
(**Note:** Students, check with your course provider if you may work online or via telephone.)

If you are a student and you are not client-facing, this course will not be a good fit for you. The course teaches how to transfer face-to-face skills to online or telephone work.



Introduction

This course has been designed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, though we expect that all the material in it will remain relevant well beyond this, and so will continue to serve both counsellors and their clients well into the future.

The pandemic has changed all our lives, bringing a wide range of challenging emotions – fear, anxiety, grief, sadness, frustration, anger, guilt and loneliness, to name just a few. While some feelings are shared by many people, each individual is also affected in unique ways, impacting on their relationships, work and wellbeing.

Indeed, many clients are finding that their mental wellbeing is currently being deeply challenged, with no clear end in sight. For those who are emotionally vulnerable, it's a recipe for desperation, despair and distress – yet their counselling, perhaps their mainstay of emotional and psychological support, may have suddenly been halted by the need to stop face-to-face work, as part of our social responsibility to reduce spread of the virus. Meanwhile, qualified counsellors in private practice are losing income, and counselling students can't build their practice hours: there are no winners in this difficult situation.

The alternative – offering telephone or online sessions – is new to many counsellors, and different in many ways from face-to-face work, yet you may need to upskill fast so you can continue to support your clients.



Features of the Course

- 80 hours of guided tuition, exercises and buddy training – all online, accessed via a secure portal
- Total flexibility to study at your own pace
- Blended learning to accommodate varied learning styles, including visual, auditory and kinaesthetic
- A balance of self-directed learning and live events so you can clarify your understanding and ask questions
- Supporting documents and experiential work to reinforce your learning
- A completion certificate to evidence your learning and CPD

You can read feedback on how participants have found the course at <https://counsellingtutor.com/testimonials-online-and-telephone-counselling-course/>

We hope you will share your experience of the course when you graduate the course.



Course Aims

1. To support you in transferring your existing face-to-face counselling skills to online and telephone working
2. To help you develop an ethical and professional presence online
3. To connect you with a buddy with whom you can practise using both asynchronous and synchronous online communication tools
4. To encourage you to develop personally as well as professionally, through reflecting on your thoughts and feelings regarding online and telephone working
5. To develop your skills in communicating online with fellow professionals using discussion forums
6. To give you an enjoyable and informative learning experience



Introducing Your Presenters



Kenneth – or Ken – Kelly is a practising counsellor, a clinical supervisor and a member of the BACP. Having completed a post-graduation certificate in online and telephone counselling in 2012, he has used online skills in both private practice and agency work.

Ken holds a teaching qualification and has lectured to counsellors at practice level, as well as having authored a textbook, *Basic Counselling Skills: A Student Guide*.

In his position as Co-Director at Counselling Tutor, Ken focuses on online training provision and specialises in outcome-based online learning.



Rory Lees-Oakes is Co-Director at Counselling Tutor and author of *Counselling Theory in Practice: A Student Guide*. He spent over a decade lecturing in counselling, and continues to enjoy sharing his valuable insights into counselling theory and practice.

Rory is a qualified counsellor, clinical supervisor and lecturer. In 2015, he was awarded the prestigious Silver Plato award for outstanding use of technology in education.

He is also a Fellow of the Pearson Teaching Awards. An avid drinker of tea, he's more likely to be found in a tea room than a bar.

Their real-world experience means that Rory and Ken understand first-hand the pressures of balancing study, work and home life. This led them to set up first Counselling Tutor (to support students of counselling and psychotherapy) and – more recently – Counsellor CPD (for qualified practitioners). What motivates Ken and Rory is not only helping counsellors but also – through them – serving clients.



Modules and Topics

The six-module programme is structured as follows, with each module broken down into a number of topics:

Module 1: Introduction to Online Counselling

- 1.1 Online mind set
- 1.2 Benefits and challenges
- 1.3 Suitability/assessment
- 1.4 Synchronous and asynchronous communication
- 1.5 Disinhibition effect
- 1.6 Online contracting
- 1.7 Your relationship with technology
 - 1.7a Managing digital footprint
- 1.8 Client's relationship with technology
- 1.9 Using the right technology

Module 2: Working Ethically and Legally

- 2.1 Ethical and legal requirements
- 2.2 Best fit for the client?
- 2.3 Working within your jurisdiction
- 2.4 Insurance considerations
- 2.5 Online confidentiality
- 2.6 Data protection
- 2.7 Your disclaimer if things go wrong

Module 3: Managing Risk

- 3.1 Referrals
- 3.2 Black-hole effect
- 3.3 Emergency contact
- 3.4 Risk management
- 3.5 Therapist boundaries

Module 4: Transferring Skills into an Online Environment

- 4.1 Effectiveness of online therapy
- 4.2 Telephone counselling: Therapist considerations
 - 4.2a Attachment issues in telephone therapy
- 4.3 Clients seeing themselves
- 4.4 Text counselling: Therapist considerations
 - 4.4a Timing of sending text messages (asynchronous)
- 4.5 Working without visual clues

Module 5: Therapist-Specific Considerations

- 5.1 Online presence
- 5.2 Supervision
- 5.3 Self-care
- 5.4 Endings
- 5.5 Evaluation forms

Module 6: Into Practice and Beyond



Elements within Topics

Each topic contains a mixture of the following elements:

- video presentation by Rory on theory and underpinning knowledge, including points to reflect on
- practice discussion between Ken and Rory, applying the theory and knowledge to practice, and looking at real-world issues relevant to the topic
- lesson tasks to complete, allowing you to apply your learning to your own practice, with the help of your course buddy
- additional reading – this is essential to consolidate your learning
- resources and downloads

At the end of each module, you simply click ‘Mark Complete’; this then enables you to move onto the next module.



What You Will Need

All you need in order to participate in the course are:

- access to a computer and the internet for the duration of course activities
- a buddy to practise with: you might choose either a peer you already know or else you can find a new buddy on the dedicated course-specific private group on Facebook, which you'll be invited to join
- an interest in and commitment to learning more about online and telephone counselling.



Live Events

We offer live online webinars that are held every Wednesday and are open to all course members. At the live events, you can ask questions and clarify your learning.

Live sessions are recorded – so if you can't attend, you won't miss out and you can recap by watching the replay at a time that suits you. You will automatically receive an email invitation to each live event.



Before You Get Started

Before you get started on Module 1, do take the time to watch the introductory video at:

<https://counsellorcpd.com/online-and-telephone-counselling-course-overview/>

This will explain to you how the course works, and how you can get the most out of this learning opportunity. The top tips covered include:

- Work through the course in order, completing all elements as you go.
- Remember that this is an experiential course – so make sure you apply your learning as you go, practising with a buddy until you feel ready to work with ‘real’ clients. This will give you wisdom rather than just knowledge!
- Ensure that you complete all the reading listed. This is not just recommended; it is really important material to allow you to practise safely and ethically.
- Check that you are receiving our emails, which will all come from email addresses ending ‘@counsellingtutor.com’. Do check your ‘Spam’ and (on Gmail) ‘Promotions’ folders, and mark us on your Safe Senders list.

You do not need to be on Facebook to benefit from this course.

But if you are on Facebook, please join our course-specific private group. There, you'll be able to discuss your learning, raise any questions and – importantly – find yourself a course buddy to practise your practical skills with. This will help build your professional confidence and technological competence for when you first counsel a 'real' client online or by telephone.

We also have a generic private Facebook page, where you can network with over 30,000 students, qualified practitioners, clinical supervisors and tutors in the world of counselling and psychotherapy. If you're not already a member, do just send us a request to join, and we'll be delighted to welcome you in!



Course Recognition

National Counselling Society (NCS)

This course has been awarded Quality Checked training recognition by the National Counselling Society (NCS).



Association for Counselling & Therapy Online (ACTO)

Counselling Tutor is a recognised ACTO Online Training Provider and this course enables the graduate to join ACTO membership.





BACP Online and Phone Therapy Framework

The BACP (2021) has published an updated competence framework (see below) that identifies the knowledge, skills and abilities required by therapists who want to work with clients online and/or by telephone. This is based on research evidence into effective practice, and is designed to be used by therapists, trainers, supervisors and organisations to ensure that those counselling clients online and/or by telephone have the necessary skills and knowledge to do so safely and ethically.

We have used this framework in designing our course. Our course also contains tips on how to market your private practice effectively.

Competence

Knowledge

- 1 Knowledge of the different ways of offering OPT and of the associated technologies
- 2 Knowledge of the benefits and constraints of OPT

Professional competences

- 3 Knowledge of, and ability to operate within, legal, professional and ethical guidelines when offering OPT
- 4 Knowledge of, and ability to work with, issues of confidentiality and consent, including data protection, GDPR and ability to monitor own digital footprint and that of the clinical work
- 5 Ability to negotiate a contract for OPT
- 6 Ability to recognise, acknowledge and respond to issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion pertinent to OPT
- 7 Ability to make use of appropriate supervision for OPT
- 8 Ability to work internationally

Competence

Therapeutic competences

- 9 Ability to use effective language and communication processes specific to OPT
- 10 Ability to work remotely with psychological processes
- 11 Ability to manage endings for OPT
- 12 Knowledge of and response to practitioner self-care and well-being related to OPT

Assessment, planning and referral

- 13 Ability to assess suitability for OPT
- 14 Ability to identify, assess, acknowledge and respond to existing and/or emerging risk during OPT
- 15 Knowledge of referral and signposting pathways

Meta-competences

- 16 Assessment
- 17 Risk
- 18 Adjusting the intervention to the individual when providing OPT

[Source: <https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/10849/bacp-online-and-phone-therapy-competence-framework-feb21.pdf>]



Your CPD Certificate

Once you have completed all modules of the course, you will be able to download your CPD certificate as evidence of your learning, which you can use to meet your ethical body's annual requirement.



Help and Support

If you need any assistance with technical issues – for example, navigating the course, logging in or password reminders – email support@counsellingtutor.com and our team will help you sort out and overcome the difficulty as quickly as possible.

If you have questions about the course content, then email rory@counsellingtutor.com

Now go and enjoy your course! We trust that you will find it enjoyable, stimulating and professionally rewarding.