



COUNSELLING
TUTOR

Difference and Diversity

This handout explores the foundational principles and applications of Mamood Ahmad's *Wholeness Solution*. The material emphasises the integration of social context, identity, and EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) into counselling and psychotherapy, shifting from add-on awareness to embedded practice.

The Rationale for Change

Decontextualised Knowledge in Counselling

Mainstream counselling traditions - rooted in humanistic, cognitive-behavioural, and psychoanalytic models - tend to abstract human experience from the broader socio-cultural context. This approach limits understanding by neglecting critical factors such as race, class, gender, neurodiversity, belief systems, and embodiment.

The Divide Between Primary and Secondary Knowledge

- **Primary knowledge** refers to traditional, theory-based understandings of psychological functioning.
- **Secondary knowledge** encompasses the lived experiences of individuals and communities, including cultural practices, trauma, social positioning, and power dynamics.

This separation results in systemic gaps in empathy, accessibility, and effectiveness.

The Wholeness Solution: An Overview

The Wholeness Solution offers a five-step framework to reimagine the foundation of therapeutic practice. It calls for a shift from a fragmented to a fully contextualised understanding of the self and relationship.

Step 1: Reframing the Human Self

A new model of the self is introduced, incorporating six contextual dimensions:

- **Worldview:** Core beliefs and meaning systems.
- **Identity:** Personal and social identities, including marginalised and normative categories.
- **Culture:** Social environments, histories, and values.
- **Knowledge:** Both learned (formal) and experiential (embodied) understandings.
- **Embodiment:** The physical and felt sense of experience, including trauma, survival responses, and interoception.
- **Time:** The influence of lifespan development, intergenerational transmission, and historical context.

This model, known as the **WICKED model**, becomes a framework for understanding all client experiences.

Step 2: Expanding the Relational Model

Traditional views of the therapeutic relationship are often interpersonal but ignore contextual and institutional dynamics. The Wholeness Solution reframes the relationship to include:

- Multiplicity of relationships (identity-to-identity, context-to-context).
- Structural factors (e.g. power, class, belief systems).
- Pre-emptive empathy: Knowledge required to prepare for attuned engagement.

Step 3: Embedding the WICKED Model in Practice

The WICKED framework becomes a reflective and generative tool:

- Used in case formulation, supervision, training, and self-inquiry.
- Encourages therapists to explore context in clinical themes (e.g. grief, trauma, prejudice).

Step 4: Building Structural Consciousness

Therapists are encouraged to assess their practice as a *service* and reflect on:

- Who is advantaged or disadvantaged by current systems?
- What barriers (language, sensory, physical) affect accessibility?
- How do institutional and cultural structures influence service delivery?

Step 5: Advocacy

Sustainable inclusion requires systemic change. Practitioners are called to:

- Share and promote the model.
- Advocate for curriculum reform.
- Contribute to a universal design for inclusive practice.

Applications in Professional Practice

Training and Curriculum Design

Embedding wholeness from the start of counsellor education:

- Initiating identity and context-based reflection from Day One.
- Including structured exercises using the WICKED model.

Supervision and Self-Development

- Contextual supervision enhances reflexivity and awareness.
- Positionality becomes an explicit topic in supervision discussions.

Relational Practice

- Therapists actively broach contextual issues (e.g. race, neurodiversity) when appropriate.
- Inclusive relational attunement creates safety and trust.

Ethical Alignment

- Aligns with ethical principles of justice, fairness, and non-maleficence.
- Recognises harm caused by exclusion, oversight, or cultural insensitivity.

Practical Examples

Grief and Context

Using the WICKED model, therapists explore:

- How belief systems shape the meaning of loss.
- Intergenerational transmission of grief and coping mechanisms.
- Social norms influencing emotional expression and mourning.

Embodied Prejudice

Recognising non-verbal responses in the body as sites of internalised bias:

- Freeze responses in interactions may indicate shame or prejudice.
- Awareness of embodied reactions can reveal hidden attitudes or discomfort.

Service Mapping

Practitioners reflect on the ecology of their service:

- What access needs are being met or missed?
- How inclusive are the materials, space, and communication styles?
- What is the cultural messaging of the practice environment?

Summary of Professional Benefits

- **Greater Empathic Accuracy** through contextual understanding.
- **Improved Accessibility** for diverse clients.
- **Ethical Practice** in line with contemporary guidelines.
- **Relational Depth** that includes embodied and structural dynamics.
- **Curricular and Institutional Change** through advocacy and design.

Final Thoughts

The Wholeness Solution is a strategic, inclusive approach to counselling and psychotherapy. By embedding EDI, context, and identity into the baseline of theory and practice, it strengthens the profession's sustainability, fairness, and relevance. Counsellors, supervisors, educators, and institutions all have a role in advocating for and implementing this model.

This is not merely about adding new components - it is about **completing** our understanding of the human experience.