

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	Postgraduate Diploma Couple Therapy for Depression (Level 7)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Postgraduate Certificate Couple Therapy for Depression (non-clinical)
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London Tavistock Relationships
Home School/other teaching departments	Birkbeck Centre for Counselling
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Part-time, 2 years September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	UKCP - SCoPEd
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	Not applicable.
Birkbeck Course Code	TPDCOUPD_C
HECoS Code	100495
Start date of programme	September 2023
Date of programme approval	September 2023
Date of last programme amendment approval	Not applicable
Valid for academic entry year	2023-24
Programme Director	Clea McEnergy-West (for BBK side of partnership)
Date of last revision to document	09/08/2023

Admissions requirements

Students are recruited jointly by IAPT services and Tavistock Relationships. Entrants do not need to possess previous clinical or professional expertise in mental health but should have demonstrable interpersonal skills and values consistent with providing hopeful, person-centred care within the IAPT stepped model of care. Candidates should also show a commitment to working with people with common mental health problems and an understanding of and commitment to evidence-based practice and the IAPT stepped care model

All candidates entering the programme should hold evidence of academic credit or equivalence allowing entry to the Level 7 programme. A degree at 2:2 or above in any relevant subject, or equivalent, should be considered the minimum requirement for entry. Candidates without a degree at 2:2 or above may be able to secure a place by demonstrating competency via a portfolio of evidence, which meets specified academic equivalence requirements. Candidates should show proficiency in reading, writing and spoken English of a standard necessary to support academic study and professional practice at Level 7 - IELTS 6.5 overall with a minimum of 6.0 in each element.

All candidates should have completed a Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills, which ordinarily involves a minimum of 10 days or 60 hours of face-to-face tuition at level 2 or level 3. Online courses are not acceptable.

Course aims

The Postgraduate Diploma in Couple Therapy for Depression, funded by Health Education England, trains students to provide a NICE-recommended therapy for adults with depression in an adult IAPT setting. It aims to enable students to develop the qualities, skills and competences required to develop, engage in and sustain strong therapeutic relationships with service users, to convey warmth, empathy, authenticity and compassion in their practice, and to work collaboratively with service users to support therapeutic change. Students will learn to critically evaluate the theory and principles underpinning psychotherapeutic counselling.

The Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme was launched in England in 2008 with the aim of establishing psychological therapy services to enable more people to receive evidence based, NICE-recommended psychological therapies and interventions for common mental health problems. In 2018 the NHS Long Term Plan set out commitments to increase significantly the number of adults and older adults accessing adult IAPT services by 2023/24. Delivering this expansion of the IAPT programme supports the sustainable development and delivery of a competent workforce in IAPT services.

IAPT service delivery is predicated on a stepped care model, recommended by NICE. Students on the course will work in NHS commissioned IAPT services providing Couple Therapy for Depression (CTfD).

Aims of the course

1. To develop psychotherapeutic counsellors with the qualities, skills and competences to develop, engage in and sustain strong therapeutic relationships and work effectively with IAPT service users with depression, and their families where appropriate.
2. To develop core psychotherapeutic counselling practitioner competency, including integration of practical competence in Couple Therapy for Depression, in line with the needs of service

users, families and carers. Students will learn to critically evaluate the theory and principles underpinning Couple Therapy for Depression.

3. To ensure clinical practice in accordance with local and national IAPT Service policy, including working to create inclusive and effective services for all.

4. To promote personal and professional development and self-awareness essential to successful psychotherapeutic counselling.

Course structure

Year One

Students will build their knowledge and understanding and evaluate psychotherapeutic counselling and develop ways of working with simple and more complex presentations of human distress and depression. Students will gain critical knowledge, understanding and evaluate the theories and principles underpinning Couple Therapy for Depression.

During the first-year students undertake a minimum of 150 supervised client hours of Couple Therapy for Depression with service users in an IAPT setting.

Year Two

Year Two will focus upon preparing students to work as High Intensity Therapists working in IAPT services delivering Couple Therapy for Depression. Students will develop a greater understanding and critically evaluate the application of psychotherapeutic counselling theories. Students will develop a deeper understanding and critically reflect upon the therapeutic process. Emphasis will be placed on enhancing skills in the practical application of psychotherapeutic counselling to achieve a defined standard of competence in Couple Therapy for Depression.

Students will complete 200 supervised client hours delivering Couple Therapy for Depression.

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Part-Time - Two Years					
Year 1					
7	SC02001S7	Fundamentals of Psychotherapeutic Counselling	30	Core	Terms 1-3
7	SC02002S7	Fundamentals of Couple Therapy for Depression	30	Core	Terms 1-3
Year 2					
7	SC02003S7	Application of Psychotherapeutic Counselling	30	Core	Terms 1-3
7	SC02004S7	Application of Couple Therapy for Depression	30	Core	Terms 1-3

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all the material and sessions arranged for you.

The course is divided into four modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each module, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Lectures, seminars, group work, self-directed study, assessed written work, presentation of cases, assessed group presentations, tutorials, presentation of seminar papers workshops, experiential work, and seminar papers. Reading of key texts for each week. Lectures/seminars introducing psychoanalytic thinkers and key theoretical developments. Critical discussion of key texts.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. Assessment will be through the following types of assessment:

Process Recording/Recorded Session Analysis and evaluation, Case reports, essays.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what is expected and the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to demonstrate:

- Critical knowledge and understanding of the theories and principles underpinning the psychodynamic approach and Couple Therapy for Depression.
- Critical understanding of the theories of the causes and presentations of depression
- Knowledge of, and competence to work with the emotional and psychological needs and problems of a range of adult age groups across the lifespan, including young people (18 to 25) and older adults, within CTfD
- The ability to maintain safety in the therapeutic relationship
- the ability to use self-awareness and reflexivity to enhance the therapeutic relationship and the therapeutic process
- The ability to critically reflect upon the service user's process within the therapeutic relationship
- The ability to recognise difficulties or ruptures in the therapeutic relationship and explore with the service user similarities with other relationships
- The ability to work with suicidal risk and / or other self-harming behaviours and associated 'unconscious', or 'out-of-awareness' processes and perceptions, including the conflictual and paradoxical nature of suicidal ideation
- Competence in managing a caseload of people with depression efficiently, safely and aligned to individual need
- The capacity to recognise and respect difference and to communicate effectively with service users around issues of diversity and difference

- The ability to reflect on own identity, culture, values and ‘world view’ and the impact of these on the therapeutic relationship
- Competence in using supervision to aid clinical decision-making and continuing to learn from on-going continuing professional development
- The ability to work with issues of power and authority experienced in the ‘unconscious’ or ‘out of awareness’ processes of the service user as part of the therapeutic process
- The ability to utilise audit and evaluation tools to monitor and maintain standards within practice settings
- Critical understanding of research methodologies and evidence-based practice and a working knowledge of undertaking a research-informed project
- Knowledge and competence in working therapeutically, effectively and ethically with service users in person and using online video platforms and the telephone, and the capacity to recognise, acknowledge and respond to issues of equality, diversity and inclusion pertinent to different technologies
- The ability to critically evaluate research in relation to psychotherapeutic counselling and to integrate relevant research findings into practice
- Critical knowledge and understanding of the application of the main therapeutic strategies stemming from the core therapeutic framework and CTfD in clinical practice
- A commitment to addressing disparities in access, experience and outcome.
- The capacity to implement treatment models in a flexible but coherent manner
- The ability to adapt interventions in response to service user feedback
- The ability to apply the analytic/dynamic model flexibly in response to the service user’s individual needs and context
- The ability to establish an appropriate balance between interpretative and supportive work
- The ability to identify and apply the most appropriate analytic/dynamic intervention and to apply the model skilfully

Careers and further study

You will find Couple Therapy for Depression graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- You will be equipped to work in either the statutory or voluntary sector and as a private practitioner in the field of Couple Therapy for Depression.
- You will be eligible to apply for registration with UKCP
- You will become part of Tavistock Relationship’s alumni group, and take advantage of their high-quality CPDs and conferences, which will help you to keep on top of recent developments in the field and to further develop your clinical practice.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website.](#)

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck’s academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

TR offers a range of CPD events that students are able to attend. This links them to TR's wider learning community and gives them further exposure to cutting-edge ideas and clinical practice.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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