Professional Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy
2022-2024

Persona was established in 1995 as a not-for-profit organisation with the purpose of providing education, personal and professional development opportunities in the area of inter-personal relationships and counselling founded on the principles of the Person-Centred approach.

Professional Status of the Programme:
The Persona Diploma Programme is a BACP Accredited Course and has been professionally accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) since 1998. BACP course accreditation is a recognised professional standard of a high quality, professional practitioner training course. This guarantees a standard of training accepted for BACP membership, registration and individual practitioner accreditation and means that the course content, delivery and assessment to be of the highest professional standards. BACP uses external benchmarks and curricula (QAA/SQA/SCQF criteria) to set their standards and all courses are reassessed every five years to ensure that these standards are maintained.

Academic Status of the Programme:
The Professional Diploma is academically credit rated with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) at Level 11 using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF 120 credit points). This means that students who wish to further their studies, are eligible to progress to a higher education institution once they have successfully completed the diploma programme.

The 2022-2024 Diploma Programme is specifically designed to accommodate people who have work commitments during the week which make weekly attendance difficult and for that reason the course takes place mainly at weekends or week-long units over two years. The programme benefits enormously from being largely residential providing regular periods of intense and focused work as well as creating the opportunity for students to spend some informal time with others on the course; both are important and part of the immersive design and structure of the programme. The programme provides an advanced training in the Person-Centred approach and allows students the opportunity to engage in professional and personal development which meets the standard that BACP requires for professionally accredited counsellors.

The Person-Centred Approach
The Person-Centred approach is founded on a well-integrated theory of growth and development which stresses the inner resources of each individual. As a therapeutic approach it sets out to provide individuals with a connection with another person which minimises adverse conditions and maximises those conditions which support development. The Person-Centred approach is based on the work of Carl Rogers which has continued to develop and expand its theoretical foundations and therapeutic application from his original writings.

Aims of the course:
- To provide the opportunity, environment, resources and support for students to undertake accredited training in professional counselling.
- To offer a programme which supports and respects the learning process of students by incorporating a variety of training methods relevant to counselling.

- To provide a learning and assessment process which is Person Centred and encourages students to take major responsibility for their learning.
- The programme will provide a primary focus on the central concepts and theories of the Person-Centred approach in counselling and will extend to include other theories of human growth and development and their related therapeutic approaches, models of psychopathology and related mental health issues
- The course will provide a structure within which students will be invited to consider their own internal processes, reactions, thoughts and feelings in support of their development as reflective practitioners.
- The course will support the development of student's clinical competence during their clinical practice by focusing on the development and integration of:
    a) their counselling skills
    b) their underpinning knowledge of therapeutic processes and their ability to apply this to their work with clients
    c) their understanding of their ethical and professional responsibilities
    d) their personal reflectiveness and understanding of intra-psychic and interpersonal processes.

Our approach to learning and development:

The Persona approach to development and learning can be summed up as creative facilitation. We see ourselves not so much as teachers or lecturers but rather as facilitators of learning: we encourage the learner to explore and understand themselves as "seekers of truth" rather than "receivers of knowledge". Our aim is to create a learning environment in which students are affirmed as learners and find their own learning path. It is essentially an experiential approach which means that we create and use a wide variety of activities with the specific aim of prompting self-directed learning, personal reflection and insight. Whether the focus is on theoretical concepts, improving skill or deepening self-awareness it is the same philosophy. Persona is as committed to a learning process which supports learners as it is to learning outcomes.

The programme is designed to be interactive and the facilitation process includes a variety of different learning activities which a learning dynamic within which everyone, participators and facilitators alike engage in a creative learning process. It is also important not to lose sight of learning outcomes; theories are there to be understood, clinical skills and ethical awareness and a deepening self-awareness is essential to the process of developing as an effective, ethical practitioner. As a professionally and academically accredited programme it is important that the programme learning outcomes are understood and progress is measured against them. Written assignments, client recordings, individual supervision and client work are all part of the learning portfolio which is used to assess the student's ongoing learning and development.

Programme Structure

The programme comprises residential weeks and weekends and non-residential study days delivered on a part-time basis over two years. The content of the course is organised, delivered and assessed under the heading of six themes, which constitute the six modules of the programme.

- Module 1 and Module 2 start and finish in year one.
- Module 3 and Module 4 start and finish in year two.
- Modules 5 and 6 start in year one and finish at the end of year two

Programme Modules

Module 1: The Theory and Practice of Therapeutic Change (Year 1 Term 1)

- The process of personality change, behaviour change
- Psychological contact and perception
- The role and importance of Empathy, Congruence and Unconditional Positive Regard in Person-Centred Counselling and how these elements are used in other approaches
- The characteristics of Beginnings, Middles and Endings as three phases in the counselling relationship
- Different dynamics and processes between working one-to-one and working with couples and groups

Module 2: Personality Theory, Psychopathology and Psychological Wellbeing (Year 1 Term 2)

- The Person-Centred perspective on individual development

- The impact of social systems and social conditioning on the development of the individual
- The underpinning principles, concepts and terminology used in the Medical Model to define mental health, mental illness/psychopathology
- The pharmacological and psychological 'treatment' of emotional/psychological problems,
- An examination of mental health care provision in different contexts
- An examination of contemporary Person-Centred concepts of working with 'disturbance'
- Counter-conditioning and the impact of the Person-Centred 'core therapeutic conditions'

Module 3: Client Issues, Reflective Practice and Developments in Counselling (Year 2 Term 1)

- Social, cultural, economic and spiritual influences and their impact on the counselling process
- An examination of Intersectionality and its impact on the counselling process
- An examination of personal bias, prejudice and stereotypes and its impact on the counselling process
- Power and authority dynamics in counselling
- Equal opportunities, discriminatory practices and social inclusion, cultural & sub-cultural differences
- Therapeutic processes and challenges which are characteristic of particular client groups
- An examination of the similarities and differences between the Person-Centred approach and other therapeutic approaches

Module 4: Research Issues and Research Methods (Year 2 Term 2)

- An appreciation of the role and value of research in the Counselling Profession
- An examination of different social research methods and their application to counselling
- Developing a research question
- Accessing and synthesising diverse sources of literature and critically evaluating research
- The examination of research in counselling and psychotherapy and the integration of research findings into practice

Module 5: Clinical Placement, Clinical Supervision, the in-depth analysis of the counselling process (Years 1 & 2)

- The BACP Ethical Framework
- The professional and ethical importance of supervision and the value of individual and group supervision
- Supervision as a framework for evaluating client work by examining the therapeutic process from the separate perspectives of the counsellor, the client and the relationship between the two
- The supervision process as a framework for integrating theory and practice
- The consideration of risk assessment, risk protocols, ethical issues and how to respond to them
- The therapeutic requirements of different client groups at different stages of therapy
- The impact of the counselling context on the client, the counsellor and the supervisor
- The role of group supervision in assessing clinical competence

Module 6: Personal Development, Developing Insight and Reflective Practice (Years 1 & 2)

- Understanding intrapersonal factors which influence interpersonal communication and dialogue
- Self-awareness, self-monitoring and articulating personal values, attitudes and prejudices
- Identifying and addressing personal limitations which impact on their ability to work with certain clients or client groups
- Accurately reflecting on their own psychological processes and those of others and exploring areas of unresolved issues from their life-experience
- Making reliable use of their own inner "locus of evaluation" and ability to self-regulate
- Soliciting, receiving and making use of feedback from others
- Assessing their own Counselling practice, their own understanding of theoretical concepts, their own ability to be reflective
- Understanding and maintaining their own practice within the context of the BACP ethical framework and "best practice" procedures around all aspects of being a professional counsellor
- Taking ownership of their on-going professional development and learning

Programme Delivery:

The programme utilises different learning activities to deliver and support student's learning and development. Some aspects of the course are presented in lecture form and there are presentations by external specialists covering different topics relevant to counselling. Interactive workshops are the principal learning environment for exploring specific themes and issues. Other learning forums which are used include: the Course Community Meeting, Process Reflection Groups, Skills Practice Groups, Encounter Groups, Study Groups, Discussion groups, 1:1 reviews. Supervision Groups also form a key part of the course programme. These groups provide a forum for exploration and discussion of counselling issues and an excellent opportunity for students to integrate theory with practice, supporting reflection on theory from the point of view of the actual therapeutic relationships. As students will be practicing in a diverse range of settings, it gives the members of the group a chance to broaden their experience of issues that they might not normally work with in their own counselling setting.

Non-residential Study Days are held at Grove House in Uddingston where the Persona office and training rooms are based. Residential training days will be held at The Moorings Hotel in Motherwell. Residential participation on the programme is an integral part of the programme and a requirement of the programme. The residential venue provides a safe and welcoming environment which is supportive to the learning and reflective processes of the programme. Single occupancy rooms are provided as standard.

Clinical Placements: Developing Counselling Competence

During the course, students develop their competence as counsellors through a range of different activities including practice sessions working as a "client" and "counsellor". Out with the course, there is a requirement for students to engage in a clinical placement. In order to meet the requirements of the counselling practicum, students usually need to set aside **at least half a day per week** for the duration of the programme.

The course provides information about different counselling agencies who have been approved by the course. It is the student's responsibility to contact agencies and arrange their own counselling placement. The course administration and course staff will assist course members, but ultimately it is the responsibility of students to ensure that they are able to meet the **minimum course requirement of 120 hours** of **in-person,** appropriately supervised counselling practice. Students should be aiming for an **average of 3 hours of client work per week** once they have completed the Readiness to Practice assessment at the end of Module 1. Ideally this will include a mixture of longer term as well as shorter term client work.

It is also a requirement of the course that students engage in individual supervision with a supervisor who has been approved by the course. Students are required to attend individual supervision throughout the course, at a **minimum frequency of one hour per fortnight and a minimum of 32 hours for the duration of the programme**. The frequency of supervision might need to be increased if the student's level of work or personal difficulties requires it. The fees for individual supervision are additional to the course fees. Individual supervision is not assessed and individual supervisors are not required to submit a report on the student's performance during their individual supervision sessions.

Course Assessment

The programme has a blend of formative and summative assessment processes which are structured to provide ongoing support and encouragement, with feedback from members of staff and other students. Formal feedback is provided specifically in relation to each of the three core areas of the course:

- **Theoretical understanding**: is monitored and assessed through written assignments and presentations
- **Clinical competence**: is monitored and assessed through live practice sessions, recorded sessions, group supervision and the presentation of case studies
- **Self-reflectiveness and the ability to understand process**; is monitored through participation in Course Community Meetings, Process Reflection Groups, Process Orientated/Experiential Workshops and Encounter Groups

Required Submissions

Students are required to undertake written work during the course as a focus for their personal research and reading and to allow them to demonstrate their learning. Each module has a formal assessment process; modules 1, 2 and 3 include a 5000 word written assignment, and module 4, a 4500 written assignment, which are tutor

assessed. Modules 5 and 6 have a blended assessment process which includes oral presentation and analysis of client work, and the students process, supported by written assignments which are tutor, peer and self-assessed.

The assignments are designed to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their theoretical understanding and to integrate this with clinical work and self-development. The assignments are structured in such a way as to give the students the maximum opportunity to demonstrate their learning. To meet the academic requirements of the programme, a **minimum of 100 hours per module will be required for independent reading and writing of assignments**.

With regard to the assessment of clinical work, students are expected to audio record a minimum of three counselling sessions with clients, with, of course, the client's informed consent. These recordings offer the best possible insight into the student's competence, providing a key opportunity for personal/professional development.

Selection and Admission

Admission to the Persona Professional Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy is founded on a policy which ensures equality of opportunity to all applicants. Persona welcomes applications from motivated students from a range of different backgrounds, who have appropriate experience and relevant professional, academic or vocational qualifications. Persona assesses applicants on the basis of merit, ability and potential. The selection process takes account all aspects of an individual's application and not simply their academic profile.

Persona assesses a candidate's suitability, motivation and potential on the basis of their **written application,** their qualifications and experience as well as their participation in the individual and group interview process. Our aim is to select individuals who have the potential to complete the programme and successfully meet the academic and professional requirements of the programme. Applications for admission to the programme are considered without regard to ethnicity or national origin, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, gender, religious or political beliefs, marital status or socio-economic background.

Persona aims to conduct a selection process in which all candidates are treated fairly and courteously by communicating with applicants in a timely fashion and providing clear information throughout the process. The admissions procedure involves the assessment of the candidates written application, and performance during an individual interview and group interview. Persona aims to treat all applicants as individuals and with fairness; we make reasonable adjustments to our admissions process as well as to our academic delivery in order to ensure that we meet the needs of applicants with disabilities.

Entry Requirements

All applicants must have completed a foundation training in either Counselling or Counselling Skills (e.g. COSCA) as a minimum entry requirement. We may also consider applications from candidates who have completed similar courses and have substantial relevant experience and are able to make a case for themselves on the basis of 'equivalent experience'. Equivalent experience would mean that the applicant has experience of working (paid or as a volunteer) in a role which necessarily involves using counselling skills and creating a supportive relationship with those using that service. It would also mean that the applicant has been working in this role for a significant length of time so that they could discuss their development over time in using these skills.

Selection Process

All candidates are invited to submit a completed application form supported by two professional references. Enclosed with the application form is the set of questions which we ask each referee to answer on behalf of the applicant. Referees should send the completed reference directly to the course administration office. The interview process consists of two separate stages; the first stage involves two individual interviews and the second stage is a group interview. The individual interviews are with the Course Director and a member of the core staff team, the group interview process is facilitated by members of the Persona staff team.

The selection procedure involves the assessment of the candidate's written application, and their presence during the individual interviews and group interview. The Application Form has been devised to elicit only the most

essential information about the individual, which is done knowingly as part of our equal opportunities approach to selection. During the individual and group interview the staff team assesses each candidate against a set of criteria. All candidates are assessed using the same criteria. The staff team are looking for evidence of an understanding and appreciation of counselling, an understanding of human nature and interpersonal relationships, psychological maturity, a sense of commitment, motivation and responsibility and the ability to cope with the different challenges of the programme.

All applications receive a written acknowledgement which informs them if they are being offered an interview and the interview date. The interview process involves two separate meetings; the first part (two individual interviews) lasts between 30-45 minutes per interview and the second part (a group interview) lasts three hours. The individual meetings are with two of the core staff team including one Director and the group interview process which involves other applicants is facilitated by the same staff. Individual interviews will be online and group Interviews are held in Grove House, Uddingston. Following an interview, successful applicants will be offered a place on the course. Once a place has been accepted and a deposit has been paid, the applicants place on the course is secure.

Acceptance of place:

Students will be asked to **pay a deposit of £500 within two weeks** of being offered a place on the course. The deposit is non-refundable and will guarantee their place on the course. Prior to the start of the course successful applicants will be issued with a list of Individual Supervisors and Placement Agencies which Persona students have worked with in the past. In addition, you will be required to complete an application form to join **the PVG scheme with Disclosure Scotland** and provide documentation that confirms your name, date of birth and address.

Persona Staff Team:

The programme is designed, facilitated and delivered by a team of experienced person-centred practitioners, supervisors, trainers and group facilitators.

- Ishtar Swaffield: MBACP Registered
- Ross Cairns: MBACP Registered
- Clair Higgon: MBACP Accred
- Sheila Morrison: MBACP Accred
- Alison Reid: MBACP Accred
- Sue Black: MBACP Accred
- Janet Keogh: MBACP Registered
- Sarah Austin: MBACP Registered

Programme Dates

Non-Residential Study Days run from 9.00am to 5.30pm. During the residential weeks and weekends the timetable is from 9.00am to 9.00pm, (with breaks!) apart from Fridays, when the programme finishes at 5.30pm.

Year 1

Module 1:

Week - Monday September 26th to Friday September 30th 2022
Study Day - October Saturday 15th 2022
Study Day - October Saturday 29th 2022
Study Day - November Saturday 5th 2022
Study Day - November Saturday 19th 2022
Study Day - December Saturday 3rd 2022

Module 2:

Week - Monday January 9th to Friday January 13th 2023
Study Day - February Saturday 18th 2023
Study Day - March Saturday 4th 2023
Study Day - March Saturday 18th 2023

Study Day - April Saturday 15th 2023
Study Day - May Saturday 20th 2023
Weekend - June Saturday 17th to Sunday June 18th 2023

Year 2
Module 3:
Week - Monday September 18th to Friday September 22nd 2023
Study Day - October Saturday 7th 2023
Study Day - October Saturday 21st 2023
Study Day - November Saturday 11th 2023
Study Day - November Saturday 25th 2023
Study Day - December Saturday 9th to Sunday 10th 2023

Module 4:
Study Day - January Saturday 13th 2024
Study Day - January Saturday 27th 2024
Study Day - February Saturday 17th 2024
Study Day - March Saturday 16th 2024
Study Day - April Saturday 20th 2024
Week - May Monday 13th to Friday 17th 2024
Weekend - June Friday 14th 6pm to Sunday 16th 2024

Please note: a minimum of 80% attendance on each separate element of the programme is a course requirement.

Programme Fees
The overall cost of the **2022-2024** programme is **£8,850.** An initial deposit of £500 is required to secure a place on the programme. Thereafter, the course fees for each year are £4,175. Fees are required to be paid in advance at the beginning of the academic year. Payment Plans are available on request.

The course fees include the cost of **student enrolment, PVG check with Disclosure Scotland, BACP Student Membership** and **full board and single room accommodation** at the venue. **Residential attendance is a mandatory requirement of course participation.**

Please note: The course is <u>not SAAS funded</u>.

Additional Fees

Students are required to complete clinical practicum which involves 120 client hours with a placement organisation and 32 hours of **Individual Supervision.** This cost of individual supervision is not included in the course fees and can range from £35-£45 per session.

Although it is not a mandatory requirement of the course the vast majority of students choose to engage in **personal therapy** during the programme. The cost of personal therapy is also met by the individual student.