Institute of Counselling
experts in clinical and pastoral counselling

Dip CPC (Course 5000N)

MODULE 1

UNIT 1 -
Introduction to Theories and Models of Counselling

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All of our courses stand alone with comprehensive notes contained within the course for your studies. However, to further enhance your learning you will find references to various books and websites throughout the course. These books can be purchased from Amazon or Sage online. Below are some books, articles and You-tube sources to enhance your studies.

**Books**
You can purchase text books online from:

a. Amazon: [http://www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)
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You can source good academic articles from:

c. Google Scholar: [http://scholar.google.co.uk](http://scholar.google.co.uk)
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**YouTube Videos**
Examples:

- Carl Rogers (Speaking on Counselling) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjTpEL8acfo&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjTpEL8acfo&feature=related)
- Aaron Beck (Speaking on the history and future of CBT) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wr4sMR33lmw&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wr4sMR33lmw&feature=related)
- Institute of Counselling channel (Counselling audio and video files) [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd5TSm5vM?eWulHwhb--06G](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd5TSm5vM?eWulHwhb--06G)

Click the links to view the relevant materials
UNIT 1
INTRODUCTION TO THEORIES AND MODELS OF COUNSELLING

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The Aims of this Unit are:

- To make you aware of the range of different theories and models of counselling.
- To explore by comparison and contrast the principal theories, concepts, models of pastoral counselling and pastoral care.
- To demonstrate a detailed knowledge and a critical evaluation of current perspectives and models of the principal counselling approaches.

Notes:
Throughout the text the personal pronouns she / her, depending on the context, incorporate he / him.

Study Instructions

You should read each section of the Unit, satisfying yourself that you understand each section before moving on to the next one.

You should attempt the activities indicated in the Unit and also in your Practice Activities Portfolio: Activities 1 & 2.

Ignore all references in the text to core textbooks or videos.
These internal references have been replaced by your Study Planner.
1. Introduction to Counselling Theory

What do Counsellors Actually Do?

As soon as someone introduces him or herself as a ‘counsellor’, people are generally interested in what he or she does with, to, or for the client. “But what do you as a counsellor actually do?” is a common question. The answers are as varied as the types of counsellors that are available.

What is important is that the counsellor knows exactly what he or she does and why it is done in a specific way. Counselling is a very disciplined way of using specific skills, concepts, theories and models to help clients. The skilled responses of the counsellor come from an intention to help the client in a specific way using specific skills and techniques.

Professional counsellors, while they work with clients, are constantly asking themselves, “What am I doing with this client at this moment?” and “Why am I doing it?” Answers to these questions are usually based on some theories of human psychology.

Why Have Theory?

So, you may ask, if we’ve been puzzling about this, why do we need theory? Try to think why theory might be valuable in a 21st century counsellor.

Some reasons could be:

- As counsellors we are concerned to help people change. Good theory, based on sound research, can help to explain and predict behaviour. Accurate explanation and prediction can lay a solid foundation for good models of practice.

- We rarely work in isolation. Knowing how others may view our clients, and from which theoretical insight they are looking, can help our own interventions.

- We sometimes get ‘stuck’ with a client. A knowledge of theory can help us see where we can get help.

- By studying more than one theorist we can begin to appreciate the complexity of our clients (and ourselves), which should improve our practice and help us guard against simplistic cause-and-effect solutions.
No doubt you can find many more reasons. Perhaps we need to bear in mind:

If you really want to help somebody, first of all you must find him where he is and start there. This is the secret of caring. If you cannot do that, it is only an illusion, if you think you can help another human being. Helping somebody implies you understand more than the other person does, but first of all you must understand what that person understands. If you cannot do that, your understanding will be of no avail. All true caring starts with humility. The helper must be humble in her attitude towards the person she wants to help. She must understand that helping is not dominating, but serving. Caring implies patience as well as acceptance of not being right and of not understanding what the other person understands.

The most important aspect of theory is that it can give us a disciplined way of looking at ourselves, our clients and our relationships. If we can establish, through research, some reliable theoretical principles of how and why we live as we do, we may be better able to manage our own lives and better able to meet the needs of those we seek to help.

**Practical Problems**

Some of the practical problems in applying theory to counselling are as follows:

- Some theories were devised to explain abnormal behaviour.
- Most theories were devised within a Western/European context.
- There is confusion over boundaries between clinical disciplines.
- Differences in theoretical approaches.

**Devised to Explain Abnormal Behaviour**

One of the difficulties in applying some theories to counselling is that they were devised to explain or predict the behaviours of people suffering from severe mental illness. Counselling does not usually work in this field, although there is increasing challenge about what is ‘normal’, and what is counselling and what is therapy.

**Devised within a Western/European Context**

Another difficulty is that the theories were mostly devised by Western European thinkers - usually men. A cross-cultural approach is slow in appearing, as is a feminist perspective of counselling theory.

**Boundaries Between and Among Disciplines**

It is also important to differentiate between the boundaries of Psychiatry, Clinical Psychology, Psychotherapy and Counselling. Yet much of the theory is shared between the disciplines and there is some confusion about differences in practice too.

**Differences in Theoretical Approaches**

A further difficulty is that some theories are concerned with only part of the human experience (for example child development), whereas others attempt to look at the whole dimension. This makes comparison of one theory against another problematic. It also raises the question of whether counsellors should adopt one theory or follow a more eclectic or integrated approach.
Much of theory underpinning counselling has come to us via psychology. The Greek word from which theory is derived is theoros, which can be translated as an onlooker or spectator.

Theorists can be said to offer us ways of looking at human behaviour, and the object of this unit is to give students an overview of the work of the theorists who have most influenced counselling practice.

It is important to remember that this course is only a foundation; there is no substitute for reading the work of the theorists for yourself. It is also important to remember that theoretical knowledge and insight does not, by itself, make for good counselling. Insights have to be translated into sound counselling skills otherwise they are not helpful to clients, however interesting they may be to counsellors.

In this course the Core Conditions (Rogers) or assumptions of the counsellor’s relation with the client are:

**GENUINENESS / SINCERITY, ACCEPTANCE and EMPATHY**

Genuineness / Sincerity. The ability to be real, sincere and honest about yourself as a counsellor and your clients.

Acceptance. Accepting clients as worthwhile persons, thus demonstrating a sense of personal warmth and caring.

Empathy. The ability to perceive the client’s experiences and to sense the client’s feelings as if they were your own, thus providing a base of emotional understanding.

These Core Conditions are essential to effective counselling practice and should not be negatively affected by theoretical knowledge. If theory prevents us from listening fully to a client then it is not useful.

A more detailed discussion of these core conditions will form part of later units.
In the West it is often assumed that Freud is the father of counselling theory, but of course people have been speculating about human behaviour since time began! Some examples have been selected:

**Hebrew (Biblical) Roots**

In the Books of Proverbs and the Psalms (part of a subsection of the Hebrew/Jewish Biblical writing known as Wisdom Literature), there is an attempt by man to understand himself and his surroundings, and to give expression to his feelings.

**Proverbs**

**Child Education**

“Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.” [Prov. 22v6]

**Fear**

“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept free.” [Prov. 29v25]

**Psalms**

**Confession**

“I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.” [Psalm 32v5]

**Aristotle (Holistic):**

Studied dreams, memories and laws of association. He had a keen interest in observing life. One of his great observations was that to understand man, one must understand the total person (holistic).

**Plato (Dualistic):**

Believed that man is a rational creature who can, by reason alone, discover absolute truths about himself and the universe. He believed in a double order of phenomena:

**Ideas and Things**

**Mind – Body (Dualism)**

Things are the substance of the body.

Ideas are the substance of the mind/soul.

Conflict resulted between the holistic and the dualistic approaches and it is still going on today.

**Ancient Greek Roots**

The ancient Greek philosophers made what could be described as astute observations about man.

**Conflict**

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the courts of the ungodly.” [Psalm 1v1]
**Twentieth Century Roots**
Along with the holistic and dualistic approaches a third approach developed – namely elementarianism.

**Holistic Approach:** To study the whole organism rather than isolated parts. The whole tells the story of the parts.

**Example:** Gestalt and Humanistic Psychology (Perls) (Rogers)

**Dualistic Approach:** To study the mind and the body as two separate parts of the whole organism.

**Example:** Behaviourists (Watson) (Skinner)

**Elementarian Approach:** To study the whole organism by its functioning that can be analysed into small elements.

**Example:** Structuralists (Wundt)

*The theorists named above are discussed later in the course.*

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**Schools of Counselling Theory**

**From the ancient and modern roots of psychology, the following are simple sketches of four schools of counselling theory.**

**In general and very simplistically:**

**Psychodynamic** theory focuses on the inner and largely unconscious world of the psyche. It seeks to find the roots of function and dysfunction in earliest childhood and contends that the urges which drive us are largely unconscious and were formed in childhood.

**Behavioural** theory is a direct contrast to psychodynamic, in that it is based on a belief that we have learned to be the sort of people we are, by direct training in childhood and by modelling ourselves on others. Behaviourists see people as reactive – we live in a world which causes us to react in various ways – learning helpful reactions is part of 'good' maturation.

**Cognitive** theorists differ from both psychodynamic and behavioural theorists in that they do not see us as driven by unconscious stress, nor conditioned by stimulus – response. Instead, cognitive theorists argue, we actively process, think about and plan our behaviours. We are capable of devising intellectual strategies to make sense of our world.

**Humanistic** theories focus on the importance of subjective experience and are based on a belief that people have an in-built capacity for growth and an innate potential for healthy psychological development. They emphasise the worth of the individual and validate the personal nature of how individuals find meaning in life.
A counselling theory is different from a counselling model.

Theory seeks to explain why people think, feel, behave in the way that they do.

A Model offers a way of practising counselling theory via a process.

Example: The counselling Model used by the Institute is Gerard Egan’s 3 Stage Model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>What’s going on?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>What do I need or want?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>How do I get what I need or want?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 1 - Assist the client to explore shared emotions, behaviour, facts, thinking and view of reality.

Stage 2 – Assist the client in self understanding by reflecting implied facts and feelings, intuition and insights.

Stage 3 – Assist the client with decision making, selecting options and planning appropriate steps of action.

The framework of the Egan model can be used as the process for many, but not all, of the theories we shall be looking at.

For some theorists Stage 1 and Stage 2 would be sufficient; for others it might be thought more appropriate to begin with Stage 2 and (possibly) move on to Stage 3.

Theory provides the underlying foundation, describing a client’s thinking, feeling, behaviour, etc, on which a specific counselling model, such as Egan’s, can be built.

2. The Psychodynamic Model

The Pioneering Work of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, was born in Moravia in 1856, settled and worked in Vienna, came to London with his daughter Anna in 1938, and died there in 1939. His psychology and psychotherapeutic method is described as depth psychology.

Freud’s Psychological Wednesday Circle – the ‘inner circle’ – was formed by invitation from him to several like-minded people to discuss psychoanalytic matters. This ‘inner circle’ became, in 1908, the Vienna Psycho-Analytic Society.

When working with patients under hypnosis [with Joseph Bruer], Freud observed that often there was improvement in the patients’ conditions when the sources of their ideas and impulses were brought into the conscious.

Freud believed that the repressed energy attached to disturbing sexual experiences – real or fantasy - created anxiety which found outlets in various symptoms that serve as ego defences. For Freud therefore, the concept of anxiety now includes feelings of guilt, fear, shame, aggression, hostility and fear of loneliness at the separation from someone on whom the sufferer is dependent.

Freud developed his theories throughout his life, as he moved from hypnosis to psychoanalysis, but in
2. The Psychodynamic Model (Cont’d)

a sense his work was a continuous refining of his early hypotheses that appeared in his two major works; The Interpretation of Dreams and Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex.

His view that the forces of the unconscious influence all our everyday thoughts and actions has dominated thinking about personality. His method of ‘free-association’ (where the patient is encouraged to talk freely, especially about dreams, which are “the royal road to unconscious”) has become almost a cliché. We are all familiar with the cartoon figure of the analyst sitting behind the patient on the couch, doing little, it seems, while the patient pours out material! Counselling owes a great debt to the work of Freud. We do not have to be psychoanalysts to gain insights from his pioneering works.

The main purpose of psychoanalysis is to bring repressed material from the unconscious to the conscious.

Basic Concepts of Freud’s Work

Libido
Freud saw the personality as divided into areas of instinct: Eros (life-giving, preserving and pleasure instinct), which is fuelled by energy from the Libido, and Thanatos (death and aggression instinct). Eros and Thanatos make demands upon the personality, as demonstrated below:

Throughout our lives these two instinctive areas may work together or oppose each other, just as they have done throughout the history of civilisation. Freud did not apply any moral attributes to these instincts. Pleasure seeking, for instance, does not mean being frivolous or selfish; neither does aggression mean being cruel or over-dominant. Freud’s idea was that we have an inbuilt tendency to keep our lives safe and comfortable, in a psychological sense, and this is constantly conflicting with an urge to leave things as they are, or to go backwards, which is equally strong.
Freud, influenced by his study of dreams, reckoned that psychic energy or the Libido operates on three levels:

1. **The Unconscious**
   This material which is buried very, very deeply inside us - so deeply that we censor it out, so to speak, and might deny that it exists at all. It is heavily ‘censored’ in this way because much of it is sexual and forbidden. Part of the therapist’s work is to bring this censored material to light. It often appears (in a distorted form) in dreams.

2. **The Preconscious**
   Material stored here is not so deeply buried – it is more easily accessible. Material in the unconscious has been repressed; material in the preconscious is merely unknown, we are just not aware of it, but can become so without too much difficulty. It does not need therapy to access the preconscious, but it does to access the unconscious. The preconscious is a sort of screen and sieve between the conscious and the unconscious.

3. **The Conscious**
   This aspect of personality is where we both process the external world and cope with the material stirred up in our inner world.

   Speech is especially important here because through speech we are able to verbalise internal events and this can make preconscious material conscious.

**PRIVATE ACTIVITY**

Can you think of material or events in your life, which might be seen as evidence of unconscious or preconscious material?

Think about your DREAMS!

**What is the Psyche Like?**

Freud structured personality (which he called Psyche) into three systems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>EGO</th>
<th>and SUPER EGO</th>
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The ID is what we are born with. It is filled with energy from the instincts and works to satisfy those needs. Freud said that the Id is “a cauldron full of seething emotions”.

Freud did not see the Id as having any moral function or logic. It consists of wishful impulses and operates at the unconscious level.

**The Characteristics of the ID**

- It is the oldest mental apparatus.
- It is filled with energy from the instincts.
- It is a chaos, a cauldron of seething emotions.
- It knows no judgement of values, of good or evil, no morality.
- It is not governed by logic.
- It contains the psychic content related to the primitive instincts of the body, notably sex and aggression, as well as all inherited material.
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- It is oblivious to the external world and unaware of the passage of time.
- It functions entirely on the pleasure / pain principle.
- It supplies energy for development and continued mental functioning.
- It represents a major portion of the unconscious.
- It perceives, remembers, evaluates, plans and interacts with the physical and social world around.
- It gives continuity and consistency of behaviour.
- It is separate from both personality and body.
- It is capable of change throughout life.
- It is derived from bodily sensations.
- It represents reason, logic, common sense and solves problems.
- It operates the reality principle to control the ID’s pleasure principle.
- Freud described the ID as a horse, and the Ego as its rider.

Freud proposed that the neonate (the newborn child) is endowed with an ID with instinctual drives seeking gratification through the pleasure-principle, conspicuous in the first years of life. The tendency of all natural impulses or ‘wishes’ is to avoid pain/seek pleasure.

The Ego is a specialist portion of the ID which had developed in response to the external world (particularly those aspects of the external world that affect sexuality). It acts as a sort of intermediary between the ID and the external world, because it has perception, the ability to problem-solve and the ability to repress. Left alone, the ID and its passions would destroy itself, but the Ego, ideally, represents reason, common sense and so controls the ID.

Freud described the Ego as operating with a reality principle, and so ego-strength is essential for mental health.

The reality principle replaces the pleasure principle. It allows postponement of gratification to accommodate other immediate needs, or to secure greater pleasure at a later time.

The Characteristics of the Ego
- Self-preservation through defence mechanisms.
- It controls the primitive demands of the ID and mediates between it and the outside world.

The Super-Ego is a part of the Ego that has been formed by parental or other authority agencies. The function of the Super-Ego is to assist the Ego to contain the ID, by exerting moral influence. Initially, children’s Ego strength is in response to external influences (fear of parental disapproval, etc.), but eventually the Super-Ego is internalised as our own value system.
The Characteristics of the Super-Ego

The Super-Ego, which is formed gradually within the Ego as a mechanism for maintaining the ego-ideal, is the sum of the influences of:

- Parents (often modified by other people)
- Culture
- Race
- Family

The Ego-Ideal is based on the admiration the child feels for its ideal parent. It is the standard of perfection we create for ourselves and is derived from loved or admired (rather than from judging and threatening) figures and images. The ego-ideal is responsible for the sense of guilt and self-reproach so typical in neuroses. It consists of:

- Precepts, “You ought to be like this”.
- Prohibition, “You ought not to be like that”.
  (Precepts and prohibitions result from the struggle to resolve the Oedipus complex and also represent conscience).

Defence Mechanisms

To cope with anxiety (look back and remind yourself of the three sources of anxiety), Freud thought that the Ego develops and uses defence mechanisms. This term is often used as a criticism, but Freud did not use the term critically. He doubted whether the Ego could function without defence mechanisms. On the other hand, he did point out that we may cling to defence mechanisms long after they are useful. If we do, we can restrict the development of the Ego strength because too much psychic energy goes into maintaining the defences, thus limiting the energy available for other work. Defence mechanisms are, however, a necessary part of socialisation. The most usual forms of defence mechanisms are outlined below:

**Repression:**

Painful or conflicting feelings are repressed in two ways:

a) Pre-conscious material (which is admissible) is pushed back into the unconscious.

b) Unconscious material is forbidden to enter the preconscious, and so is never known.

**Sublimation (or Displacement):**

This involves displacing instinctual impulses (usually sexual ones) into socially acceptable channels. Sport or art, for example, may be the sublimated expression of sexuality.

Try to think of all the influences that have contributed to your Super Ego.

Are they all helpful?