



Diploma in Integrative Counselling - A Christian Perspective

2025-2027



Introduction

This **Integrative Diploma in Counselling** has been delivered for the past 25 years, and one of the unique features of this course is the inclusion of a **Christian Perspective** as part of the core theoretical model.

This Diploma is **fully validated by COSCA**, the National Accrediting Body for Counselling in Scotland. The course is delivered face-to-face and is supported by additional material on our online learning platform. This unique approach is approved by COSCA. Students will interact with, and have full support from, their tutors throughout the course.

The face-to-face elements of the Diploma 2025–2027 will be facilitated and taught by the Course Director (Scotland) **Lynn Millar** alongside the Course Director (Ireland) **Laura Wylie** and a team of qualified, experienced tutors. Some of the lectures on our online learning platform are taught by **Andrea Wigglesworth** and **Vicky McEvoy**, who previously taught the course.

Meet the Team

Lynn Millar (Course Director) has been counselling since 2010 and has been Director of Counselling in the Wellness Centre, St Mungo's church, in Balerno overseeing a team of more than 50 counsellors and supervisors since 2016. She has an MSc in Counselling Studies and Post Graduate Certificates in Supervision, Working with Children and Working with Couples. She is an accredited Counsellor with BACP and COSCA. A



qualified teacher and an accredited COSCA Trainer, Lynn has been involved in training counsellors and delivering a wide range of CPD events in Edinburgh and further afield for several years. She was a core tutor on the Diploma for 4 years before becoming Course Director in 2023.

Laura Wylie is CEO of Links Counselling Service where she has built up a thriving community counselling service which has 8 centres across Northern Ireland and a team of counsellors working in over 30 schools across the country. Laura trained as a counsellor in 2009 and has added to her experience throughout the years, obtaining an Advanced Diploma in Person Centred Counselling at Queens University Belfast, Advanced Diploma in Supervision, Diploma in working therapeutically with children and young people and a



Diploma in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Laura has also completed a Masters in Pluralistic Psychotherapy where she is developing research around the impact of Single Session Therapy. Laura is a BACP accredited counsellor and supervisor.

Andrea Wigglesworth has extensive experience in training counsellors. Andrea has a MSc in Health Promotion and a MSc in Counselling Studies (Advanced Practice), a postgraduate Diploma in Counselling/ Post Graduate Diploma in Counselling Supervision. She is a trained teacher and an accredited COSCA Trainer. Andrea has a special interest in Positive Psychology and is passionate about emotional and spiritual health in relationships.



Vicky McEvoy is a counsellor and supervisor accredited by the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) She has an MA Cross Professional Supervisory Practice, a BTh Applied Theology, a Diploma in Counselling, and HDip in Adult and Community Education, Vicky is also a COSCA Trainer, an Imago Couples Therapist and a Life Plan Facilitator. She has a special interest in teaching Reality Therapy (Glasser) and its application into generic counselling.

The Diploma Programme

This programme offers training in an integrative approach to counselling, embracing the concepts of **Person-Centred Counselling, Psychodynamic Counselling, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy** and **Existential Psychotherapy** from a Christian perspective. Students are encouraged to grow together in a learning community that is supportive and mutually inspiring. The course material is delivered through face-to-face teaching, personal reflection, small and large group discussion and skills practice. We also have an online platform to support learning between the face-to-face sessions. Students are encouraged to read, study, practise and process the material that is presented.

Award

Learners exit the programme with a **COSCA-recognised Diploma in Integrative Counselling, with a Christian Perspective**. Students living in the UK can be accredited by the BACP and COSCA (in Scotland). The course has 400 hours of Class/Tutor Contact, 100 hours of client work in a suitable centre, with a ratio of Supervision 1:6.

Following completion of the Diploma, students have the option of undertaking further study to obtain a BA (Hons) in Counselling, validated by Middlesex University, in Waverley Abbey, Surrey or Level 8 BSc (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy through PCI College in Dublin and Belfast or IICP in Dublin. Those with a primary degree can be admitted to the master's programmes in these colleges.

Who should apply

This programme is designed for people who wish to become professional therapists or for those who may use counselling skills as part of their work, either in a paid or voluntary capacity. It is of special interest to those who work within the caring professions, community settings or in pastoral care.

Entry Requirements

Applicants are required to complete an application form, undergo an Interview with two core tutors and supply two references. Selection procedures will apply, and prospective students must be able to:

- Articulate their interest in the therapeutic field and their reasons for pursuing this course of study both on their application form and in the interview process
- Produce evidence of prior educational attainment (see application form for further details) and ability to engage in the written assignments. A Certificate in Counselling (or equivalent) is a pre-requisite
- Show evidence of emotional maturity and self-awareness

Applications are welcomed from November 2024

A non-refundable application fee of £50.00 is required to process course applications. Upon receipt of a completed online application, students will be invited to attend an interview to demonstrate suitability for the course. Two references are also required.

There is usually a high demand for the Diploma Programme in Edinburgh so **early application is always advisable**. (From November 2024). Interviews will be held between December 2024 and April 2025.

Feedback from previous students

Here is a snapshot of what a few of our past students have to say about the course:

“This course has been transformational. I have learned so much and so enjoyed the journey.”

“Great teaching, great learning experience.”

“I am now working in private practice as a counsellor and am delighted that I was able to retrain and do a job I love.”



I completed this course and then in one year completed the BSc Hons programme and am now working in private practice. It was fantastic to do the first 2 years of the degree through a Christian worldview.”

“This course has truly changed the direction of my life. After completing it I went on to do further training in counselling children and in supervision and have gained paid employment as a counsellor in various settings including schools.”

Course Overview

The course programme is highly interactive and is taught through role-play, live teaching sessions, group work and video presentations. An online discussion forum promotes continued connections and deeper learning. The ethos of the course promotes a warm, safe environment that is free from fear, criticism and coercion. Participants will have the opportunity to produce and participate in individual written assignments, group projects and group work.

Course Aims

- To introduce participants to a practical approach to counselling
- To encourage psychological wellbeing within the programme and empower and encourage support networks
- To provide a warm and challenging environment where students can learn and grow as individuals and in community
- To encourage students to view this course in the context of lifelong learning as professional development and personal growth

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the theories underpinning counselling and psychotherapeutic practice – Person-Centred Therapy and Psychodynamic approaches, as well as an understanding of the basic principle of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Exploration of a Christian perspective as well as looking at humanistic counselling theories is a unique feature of this course and makes it particularly attractive to those who work within the culture and context of the church

- Identify ethical considerations and implications for practice
- Recognise the importance of equality, diversity and inclusive practice
- Work effectively with suitable clients
- Display competence in the core skills of counselling and psychotherapy
- Identify issues of risk with clients
- Apply counselling and psychotherapeutic skills in practice, under supervision
- Exercise appropriate clinical judgement in planning, provision and evaluation of integrative therapy
- Be Reflexive – reflecting on their work and applying their insights to their practice
- Identify blind spots and professional development needs and be able to self-reflect and to give and receive feedback
- Reflect critically within a therapeutic context, recognising limits of knowledge, skills and competence and considering self in the therapeutic process

Assessment

We use **continuous assessment** with feedback from tutors for written work and counselling practice, as well as opportunities for self and peer feedback for group projects and triad work.

Course Dates

The part-time Diploma in Integrative counselling with a Christian perspective is delivered over 2 years part-time, one weekend (Friday and Saturday) per month for 10 months each year (September to June), with by a 4-day summer school at the end of June in year 1. There will also be a requirement of engagement in online learning for 1–2 hours each month in between the weekends.

	Year 1	Year 2
Weekend 1	19–20 September 2025	18–19 September 2026
Weekend 2	24–25 October 2025	16–17 October 2026
Weekend 3	14–15 November 2025	20–21 November 2026
Weekend 4	12–13 December 2025	11–12 December 2026
Weekend 5	16–17 January 2026	15–16 January 2027
Weekend 6	20–21 February 2026	19–20 February 2027
Weekend 7	20–21 March 2026	19–20 March 2027
Weekend 8	17–18 April 2026	16–17 April 2027
Weekend 9	15–16 May 2026	14–15 May 2027
Weekend 10	19–20 June 2026	18–19 June 2027
Summer School	29 June – 2 July 2026	n/a

Venue

The course will be held in the Mercure Hotel, Livingston. Details will be confirmed nearer to the start date of the course.



Fees and costs

£2900 per annum. This can be paid **in full per annum** or **monthly**.

An initial payment of **£200** is required to confirm your place on the course once one has been offered. This will be deducted from your course fees.

Payment of the remaining fees can be made by bank transfer of **full amount** (**£2700** in September of Year 1 and **£2900** in Year 2) or by **10 monthly instalments** (of £270 in Year 1 and £290 Year 2).

Summer School

The expected cost is approximately £550 for accommodation, food, facilities and conference fee. We bring the Belfast and Edinburgh courses together at the end of June in year 1. Venue will be confirmed by September 2025. Students are responsible for their own travel costs.

Personal Therapy and Supervision costs

You and your therapist/supervisor will agree cost of personal therapy and supervision. You will be able to choose your own therapist and supervisor, but they must be a qualified counsellor/psychotherapist with a membership of a professional body e.g. BACP, COSCA.

Any questions? Contact us at info@vitalpathwaystraining.com

Programme Structure – Year 1

The following overview of Year 1 is a guideline only and is subject to change depending on the schedule of visiting lecturers. Some of the modules may be adjusted or the order of delivery may be changed within the year.

Each weekend will consist of:

- An exploration of the weekend's material in the light of the core theoretical model
- Skills and triad work
- Professional and personal development (individually and in groups)
- An opportunity to explore the dynamics presented within small and large groups

Module	Content
1 (September to November)	Introduction to the course and the Integrative Model Christian Aspects Introduction to the outline and structure of the Diploma Champion Lifestyle Learning Styles Questionnaire Aspects of the Integrative Model – why problems exist – the early years Human growth and development from Erikson's eight stage model Genogram Skills and strategies of counselling – Active listening and developing a healthy therapeutic relationship Personality theory through a Christian Worldview The Whole Person – body, soul and spirit How problems develop – unmet needs Physiology Skills and interventions including spiritual resources and interventions in counselling – reflecting and summarizing Personal Development around core values Exploring broken ness, conflict and hurt

	Life crises – life lines Working With Difference and Diversity Skills and interventions – validation (people make sense)
2 <i>(December and January)</i>	The Integrative Model: Person-Centred aspects Personality theory through a Rogerian worldview Roger's core theoretical conditions, particularly congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard Roger's theory of the self-concept and his nineteen propositions Roger's theory of human growth and development in relation to personal experience Personal Development around the 'Self' concept Begin to understand the counselling process in terms of the client, the counsellor and the client/counsellor relationship Comparison between Christian and Humanistic approach Skills work – Core Conditions
3 <i>(February and March)</i>	The Integrative Model: Psychodynamic aspects Personality theory through a Psychodynamic worldview • The influence of the unconscious Defence mechanisms and how they operate Personal Development around the power of the past Important elements of human growth and development from a psychodynamic perspective Concepts of transference and countertransference in the counselling relationship Developing skills and interventions to enable the counsellor to draw upon psychodynamic aspects of the presenting past, such as the triangle of insight Comparison between approaches
4 <i>(April)</i>	The Integrative Model: CBT aspects & The History of CBT Knowing your ABC's (Activating Events, Beliefs and Consequences) • Negative thinking traps The Hot Cross Bun (Padesky) and Total Behaviour (Glasser) Language of Choice Goal setting Socratic Questions Grounding skills Skills and triad work – using worksheets (Thought Record Sheet, Downward Arrow, STOPP etc.)
5 <i>(May)</i>	Introduction to Existential Psychotherapy Existential Psychotherapy Dying well – a Biblical view Purpose, meaning and "awakenings"

	Existential concerns – death, meaninglessness, Existential isolation, and freedom, choice and responsibility Loss Irvin Yalom, Rollo May Practical skills to help clients explore these big life questions Gratitude diary, Loss/Gain timeline, working at relational depth
6 <i>(June)</i>	Power, Working with Diversity, Ethical Practice, Using Supervision and Safeguarding The ethics of power in counselling Difference and Diversity Issues of Social context and Class, gender, age, ability/disability and race and culture Concepts of supervision and its importance in Professional Counselling practice and how this works BACP Ethical framework for the Counselling professions Practice Readiness – Competency and Safeguarding Note keeping, safeguarding, GDPR and Professional membership Ethical Problem solving and ethical dilemmas
Summer School	Loss and Bereavement with creative interventions (2 days) Working with Dreams (2 days) Skills Development Spiritual and Personal development

Programme Structure – Year 2

Year 2 will continue the pattern and balance of experiential, reflective and theoretical material established in Year 1. This year will see particular emphasis on group development work and students being able to draw on concurrent counselling practice to enhance their understanding.

Each weekend will consist of:

- An exploration of the weekend's material in the light of the integrative model
- Supervision group work
- Working towards Group presentations
- Professional and Personal Development
- An opportunity to explore the dynamics presented within small and large groups

Module	Content
1 (September)	Attachment Theory and Group Process Bowlby's Attachment Theory Ainsworth and Attachment Attachment Styles Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory Group and family dynamics Use of Group Supervision Models of Group Process Triads and Group supervision
2 (October)	Working with trauma and recovery Main features of intense stress including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Complex Trauma and Complex PTSD Neuroscience regarding the impact of trauma - splitting dynamics, survival strategies and physiological responses Psychoeducation - Fight, Flight, Freeze and Fawn - window of tolerance Symptoms of trauma apparent in client work - disassociation, approach/avoid responses to therapy, the therapeutic alliance.

	Exploration of the integrative model in working with trauma Somatic experiencing - Understanding theories regarding how trauma is stored in the body. Resourcing clients who present with trauma - regulation strategies, co-regulation and grounding techniques Triads and Group Supervision
3 <i>(November)</i>	Working with Psychopathology and Suicide Arrival at working definition of psychopathology The signs and symptoms of deteriorating mental health Factors involved in ongoing clinical assessment of mental illness including referral pathways Signs and symptoms of various disorders Suicidal ideation and risk assessment Working with families impacted by suicide Safety planning Triads and Group Supervision
4 <i>(December)</i>	Working with couples Dynamics of working with two people rather than one Understanding the phenomenon of adult attachment Childhood attachment wounds and the impact of the past on adult relationships Understanding the Conscious and Unconscious at work within relationships Unprocessed childhood experience and power struggles, Relationship styles and defence strategies. Expressing Appreciations and Frustrations, Triads and Group Supervision
5 <i>(January)</i>	Working with Children and Young People The importance of children's counselling Therapeutic Play Therapeutic use of story Creative techniques for working with children Working with Teenagers Introduction to Sand Tray Therapy Play and Practice - using games and toys Triads and Group Supervision
6 <i>(February)</i>	Working with Sexuality and Gender Dysphoria Exploration of the limitations of boundaries for those living within and without the culture and context of the church Integrative approach to working with human sexuality Exploration of different Christian views and perspectives on human sexuality

	Introduction to Gender Dysphoria Exploration of current best practice for working therapeutically with people with gender identity concerns Integrative approach to working with difference Triads and Group Supervision
7 (March)	Working with the Trauma of Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse The damage that sexual/domestic abuse has on the growth and development of the child The effects in adolescence and adulthood of the trauma of childhood sexual abuse Working with clients to help them tell their story - understanding triggers and safeguarding clients Helping clients identify and deal with the impact of abuse and form healthy relationships Legal system regarding disclosures of abuse and child protection issues Triads and Group Supervision
8 (April)	Working with Research Research Philosophy and Methodology How we acquire knowledge in the counselling field Engaging with research to inform practice The reflexive practitioner Guest researchers share their research topic Group Presentations
9 (May)	Working with Addictive Behaviours Understanding the root of addictions Learning from Gabor Mate and compassionate inquiry Addiction and dependency models - evidenced-based research in strategies for counselling people with addictions Addiction in the family system - systemic impact and healing Working therapeutically with Self-harm Triads and Group Supervision
10 (June)	Working with Endings and Moving Forward Creative endings Dealing with unplanned endings Complicated loss The Counsellor's Emotional and Spiritual Health Group Endings