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# **COSCA's Introduction to Group Counselling Skills Course**

## **A Course Outline**

### **1. Introduction**

COSCA's Introduction to Group Counselling Skills was launched in October 2009. The course is aimed at those who have already completed the COSCA Counselling Skills Certificate Course (or equivalent), counsellors, psychotherapists and trainers.

The focus of this course is the development of participants' group counselling skills as group leaders. The course will give participants the opportunity to build on their previous learning of counselling skills for use with individuals. Primarily, it will assist participants to develop their knowledge and use of group counselling skills.

The course is structured around themes and issues related to the life-span of a group, using the beginnings, middles and endings approach that will be familiar to those who completed the COSCA Counselling Skills Certificate.

The course will be delivered over 36 hours and includes 5 sections of differing lengths. There is a separate handbook for participants and trainers. The core of the learning comes from participants working with their own life experiences and engaging in guided reflection on their membership of current and previous groups.

COSCA would like to encourage all participants on this course to join COSCA, Scotland's Professional Body for Counselling & Psychotherapy, as Student members, if they are not already members of COSCA. Information on membership can be found on the COSCA website. [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk)

### **2. Participants' knowledge and previous experience**

In designing this course it has been assumed that all participants wishing to attend will have:

- previously been assessed as competent in their use of a counselling approach and will have gained the COSCA Counselling Skills Certificate or other counselling skills/counselling qualifications as approved by COSCA
- some experience of applying these skills in a counselling or similar context.

It has also been assumed that participants will have been engaged in using their counselling skills since acquiring their counselling skills qualification and will have a working knowledge and understanding of the core conditions of Empathy, Genuineness and Acceptance in addition to the skills of Attending and Responding.

It is to be expected that participants will have varying levels of knowledge, interest and experience of the different models of counselling.

### **3. Aims of the course**

The aims of the course are:

- to provide a thorough introduction to the practical and theoretical aspects of running a group using group counselling skills.
- to address the entire process of running a group from beginning to end, including:
  - pre-group planning
  - definition of the group task
  - the role of the group leader
  - the running of the group from start to finish
  - post-group considerations

### **4. Learning outcomes**

Assessment of participants will be based on their meeting of the learning outcomes (knowledge and core competencies) given below. Assessment will be undertaken throughout the course as part of the teaching, so that discernment and support are part of the same process (normally referred to as *formative assessment*).

#### **A. Knowledge**

On completion of the course, participants should be able to

- articulate their understanding of the aspects of running a group shown above, and to
- demonstrate their ability to apply this understanding to the particular context in which they work or intend to work.

#### **B. Core competencies:**

##### **Competence 1:**

*Setting up a group as a group leader using group counselling skills.*

##### **Performance criteria**

Assessment of course participants will be based on their ability to:

- demonstrate knowledge of the process of setting up a group using group counselling skills

## Competence 2:

*Establish and maintain a group as a group leader using group counselling skills.*

### Performance criteria

Assessment of course participants will be based on their ability to:

1. demonstrate knowledge of the process of running a group using group counselling skills
2. demonstrate knowledge of theoretical concepts and models
3. participate in and contribute to discussion of theory and practice
4. take an active part in the life of the group, including appropriate and relevant contribution of personal experiences
5. take responsibility for their part in the life of the group
6. demonstrate initiative and leadership
7. give and receive support

## Competence 3:

*Bring a group to an end as a group leader, using group counselling skills.*

### Performance criteria

Assessment of course participants will be based on their ability to:

1. find a satisfactory closure of the group
2. reflect on their experience, and review the group life and their part in it
3. comprehend the coming reality of life after the group, life without it
4. think about how they have already managed to transfer what they have gained and learned in the group to life outside the group
5. express their farewell to group members and take their leave.

## 5. Content of the Course

Section 1 <b>Before the Beginning</b>
Section 2 <b>The role of the group leader</b>
Section 3 <b>The beginning of the group</b>
Section 4 <b>The group life</b>
Section 5 <b>Endings</b>

## **6. Delivery of the Course by COSCA Validated Training Providers**

Training providers who are interested in offering this course require to obtain COSCA Specialist Course Validation. Specialist Course Validation application forms may be downloaded from the COSCA website. Please see under validation/specialist courses. [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk)

The handbook for Participants and the Trainers Pack (Trainers Handbook plus Participants Handbook) is available to be purchased by training providers through the COSCA office (an order form is available from the COSCA website. Please order your copies of handbooks as far in advance as possible by contacting: [marilyn@cosca.org.uk](mailto:marilyn@cosca.org.uk)).

You may contact the COSCA Development Officer (Individuals/Courses) who will guide you through the process of validation - [gillian@cosca.org.uk](mailto:gillian@cosca.org.uk)

## **7. Who can teach this course**

Trainers involved in the delivery of this course will be teaching this course in a group setting to people who already have basic counselling skills at least, and some experience of applying them.

Trainers, therefore, must:

- be COSCA accredited trainers (Certificate/Diploma)
- be experienced in the use of counselling skills
- have experience of working with groups

Brian Magee  
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