

What is Counselling Psychology?

Counselling Psychology involves the specialist application of scientific understanding to the treatment of health and mental health difficulties. Counselling Psychologists facilitate people across the life-span to address their emotional, psychological, behavioural, and physical needs. The aim is to improve wellbeing, alleviate distress and maladjustment, resolve crises, and increase capacity to live more fulfilling lives. Practitioners have a wide variety of competencies including psychological assessment and evidence-based psychological therapy.

Counselling Psychology focuses on human development and experience from individual, group, family, systemic, multi-cultural, and organizational perspectives. The discipline involves training in a number of approaches to therapy from various theoretical backgrounds, including person-centred therapy, psychodynamic or analytic approaches, cognitive behaviour therapy, and other humanistic approaches, such as emotion-focused therapy.

Counselling Psychologists work in diverse settings with both adults and children. They can be found within the HSE as well as other private and voluntary organisations. These include multi-disciplinary teams in general and psychiatric hospitals, community mental health teams, specialised counselling services, primary care, prison services, educational and disability services, businesses (Employment Assistance Programmes) and in private practice.

What Counselling Psychologists do:

- **Therapeutic Intervention**

with issues such as: anxiety--depression
panic attacks--phobias--eating disorders
addiction--sleep disorders--work related
stress--relationship and attachment
difficulties--trauma--experiences of abuse
and neglect--sexual dysfunction behavioural
difficulties--developmental and learning
disorders such as autism chronic illness--
parenting difficulties--problems of identity--
self-esteem--and life transitions such as
bereavement.

- **Formulation**

Therapy includes detailed conceptualizing of the issue, implementation of a treatment plan, and measurement of outcome

- **Assessment**

Appropriate and sensitive measurement of mental health needs, such as functioning, risk, and psychopathology. This takes place through interview, consultation, systematic observation, and psychometric testing

- **Diagnostic Work**

Diagnoses regarding all areas of functioning, as well as mental and psychological disorders using widely accepted criteria (such as Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)

- **Report Writing**

including advocacy for clients in forensic, legal and other settings

- **Research**

Design, implementation, and evaluation of research as well as conducting programme evaluation and quality assurance

- **Training and Supervision**

of psychologists, counsellors, and other healthcare professionals in diverse settings, as well as trainees and students

- **Consultancy Work**

In a variety of contexts for individuals and organisations

