

Introduction

Several significant developments have taken place in counselling and psychotherapy since publication of the second edition of this book in 2006. The Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme (IAPT), which is perhaps the biggest investment to date in talking therapies, is currently being adopted, in varying stages, throughout the UK. This initiative, pioneered by Lord Layard, and based on National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines, is intended to improve access to counselling for clients presenting with issues of depression and/or anxiety. An integral part of this programme is the provision of over 3,000 trained therapists by the end of 2011. These practitioners will be trained in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) initially, though access to wider psychological therapies is envisaged within the programme.

In this third edition of *Counselling Skills and Theory*, I shall address some of the issues raised by the ongoing changes in counselling. In particular, I think it is important to consider the growing emphasis on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and its prominence within the IAPT programme. It is also important to look at the research supporting CBT, and to review the service evaluations which IAPT routinely charts.

Alongside the changes mentioned so far, another significant development is the imminent statutory regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists. The date for achievement of regulation, which is set by the Health Professions Council (HPC), and the government, is likely to be 2011. This initiative will establish standards for education and training, and will specify approved qualifications for counsellors who wish to be registered. In addition, these changes will alter the present voluntary and often diverse systems of self-regulation, which currently exists within counselling and psychotherapy.

This focus on recent changes in counselling does not, however, substantially alter the content of this book. The third edition of *Counselling Skills and Theory* is still intended as a text suitable for students on Foundation, Certificate and Diploma level courses; it is an introductory text which presents the main theoretical approaches to counselling and psychotherapy. The basic counselling skills which form an integral part of every model are presented and discussed, while the techniques and procedures characteristic of individual approaches to counselling are described. I have tried to make the language of the text as clear and jargon-free as possible, because I know that students value this, especially when they have just started training.

Throughout the book I have included as many examples of good practice as possible. The case material used is based largely on my

experience of working with clients, and is included so that counselling theory can be set in context and linked to practice. However, any details which could possibly identify individual clients have been omitted or changed. My method of writing case material is a creative one, and involves selecting a range of issues seen in counselling and placing them in a slightly different context or background. Clients' names are changed to ensure confidentiality, and in some instances details relating to age, gender or occupation are altered too. The importance of the client/helper relationship is highlighted in each chapter dealing with theory, and the personal counsellor attributes necessary for effective therapy are also highlighted. The central place of professional training and supervision is dealt with in a separate chapter.

Finally, many of the exercises included in the book can be used by students working alone, but are probably more effective when completed with the guidance of trainers. At the beginning of training students routinely need support when undertaking exercise assignments. This is because some of the tasks may evoke unexpected emotional responses which need follow-up discussion if insight is to be achieved. This kind of experiential learning is very important in counsellor training, and can only be facilitated in the context of a well-planned and supportive educational programme.