

Bookable Events

The three workshops which follow explore different aspects of working at the interface between counselling and Christian faith and practice. They will be of particular interest to individual counsellors, networks of counsellors, or counselling centres with a Christian ethos.

Professional and professing: Integrating faith and counselling practice

Too often and for too long Christian faith and counselling practice have been separated. On the one hand, many training programmes have ignored the significance of spirituality and theology for the counselling practice of those who have a faith. On the other hand, much training which springs from Christian roots can rely too much on spiritual awareness and resources without a solid grounding in psychological and counselling theory. This day seminar is for counsellors who want to explore the interface between the Christian faith they profess and their practice as professionals in order to come to some integration of the two.

This single day workshop can be run on request.

Borders, Boundaries and no Man's Land Finding a place of integrity in a world between worlds

May be undertaken either as a stand alone workshop or as a follow on to 'Professional and Professing'. Many counsellors who hold a Christian faith feel as if they live in a no man's land between the world of their faith community and the world of their professional practice. Many of us struggle to try to find some integration between the two. But is integration always possible? Where do boundaries have to be drawn and borders respected? Will those of us who are in touch with both worlds always inhabit a no man's land or is there a place of integrity which we can make our home? In this seminar we continue the conversation begun in 'Professional and Professing' and invite anyone who is interested in these issues to join us.

This single day workshop can be run on request.

The Prophetic Edge Pastoral Counsellors speak to Church and Profession

Many counsellors who have a Christian faith find themselves on the borders both of their faith community and of their professional world. Sometimes this feels like living on the edge and having to face in two directions at once. A number of us who inhabit this edge have met together to share our experience and find ways forward. In a previous workshop we identified the border between these worlds – on which we often stand – as a prophetic place. But if we have a prophetic role, what is it that we want to say – both to the Church and to our profession? How do we find our voice and how do we communicate what we perceive? In this workshop we offer participants the possibility of finding their voice through conversation with each other in the hope that coming together in this way may give us the confidence to find ways of communicating what we want to say.

This single day workshop can be run on request.

The following workshop is more focussed on the local church or faith community and will be of interest to all those who are concerned with such issues through their work as pastoral carers, clergy and pastoral counsellors, or simply because they belong to such communities.

Grace-full or dis-graceful? Christian Community: a place of healing or of binding?

Living up to titles like 'the people of God' or 'the Body of Christ' has never been an easy task and the Bible is full of accounts of the conflicts and struggles of those who seek to live together as communities of the faithful. In more recent years, scandals involving the Nine

O'Clock Community in Sheffield and the exposure of child abuse by Catholic priests have alerted us to just how dysfunctional Christian communities can be. Less dramatic, but no less damaging, are the number of churches struggling with conflict and damaged relationships at all levels – the casualties of which often find their way out of our churches and/or into our counselling rooms. While the sunny side of being the Body of Christ is announced from the pulpit, the shadow side is rarely spoken about.

In this workshop we seek to do just that. We will look both at those elements of our theology and the dynamics which foster or mask dis-graceful relating and those which support more grace-full living.

This single day workshop can be run on request.

The three workshops which follow are best run as two day events and are intended to develop the theoretical understanding and practice of practising counsellors. They will be of particular appeal to practitioners with a Christian faith as links are drawn between counselling practice and Christian theology, but they are open to and adaptable for counsellors of any faith or none.

New Developments in Developmental Theory: Daniel Stern

The Institute of Pastoral Counselling teaches developmental theory to training counsellors as part of our integrative approach to pastoral counselling (i.e. a counselling practice whose philosophy of the human person is informed by Christian theology and spirituality). It is our view that an understanding of human development is vital to a thoughtful and effective counselling practice in that it provides the foundation for understanding health in human living, what is needed for healthy growth, what may go wrong in the process and what is therefore needed therapeutically to help put things right.

One of the theorists whose work we teach is Daniel Stern, whose emphasis on the interpersonal environment of the growing infant is very much in keeping with our understanding of human persons as essentially relational and relationship-seeking. Being both a researcher and a clinician, his work is also important for the links which he draws between our understanding of the human infant and the implications that this understanding has for clinical practice.

The Institute of Pastoral Counselling is pleased to be able to offer this workshop to practising counsellors who may not have had the opportunity to study Stern's theory of the Development of the Self in the course of their counselling training.

The body in the counselling room: An exploration of the relationship between the psyche and the soma and its implications for counselling practice

The title of this workshop reads like something out of a whodunnit story or a Cluedo game! However, there is a serious point behind our choice of title. It arose out of our awareness of how little attention we can pay, both in initial training and in our ongoing work as counsellors, to the influence of embodied experience in the counselling process. The fact of the matter is that there are two bodies in the counselling room – that of the client and that of the counsellor – yet often we behave as if our bodies are of only incidental importance in the counselling relationship. It is our contention that when we keep the body out of our awareness in our practice, at best we miss the potential richness of the wisdom which the body carries for us and at worst we ignore it at our peril.

Over the centuries, from the body-mind split of Greek philosophy, through the Enlightenment elevation of reason over matter and on to the objectification of the body in nineteenth century scientific endeavour, there has been a pull towards separating mind and body – often making the mind rather than the body the source of wisdom and understanding. This split is still in evidence in some contemporary approaches to spirituality which advocate the negation or subjugation of bodily experience in the pursuit of enlightenment.

This workshop seeks to address this split by reasserting the Judeo-Christian contention that the human person is an inseparable unity of body mind and spirit. It draws on the insight of modern neuroscience into the importance of non-verbal communication and pays attention to the phenomenological, here-and-now experience of the two bodies involved in the counselling relationship.

Unless you become like a little child.... Working to support and nurture the emotional and spiritual life of children

The Gospels clearly show Jesus according children a special place in the kingdom of heaven and fiercely denouncing those who put obstacles in their way. However, it is all too often true that Christian communities fail to reflect the priority and respect which Jesus gave to them or to value sufficiently what children can teach us about the kingdom.

This two-day workshop is designed to give you opportunities to explore practical ways of working with children to nurture their emotional and spiritual growth. It will be of interest to counsellors who want to explore the possibility of therapeutic work with children and to teachers, parents and pastoral carers who undertake the ongoing nurture of children in a faith or educational setting.

In this workshop we help you identify transferable skills to bring to working with children and helping them tell their stories. We consider together theoretical, theological and ethical aspects of this kind of work and opportunities are provided, within a safe environment, for you to try out and gain confidence in using play therapy methods such as puppets, sand tray, clay, art materials etc.

We hope you will be enabled to access and enjoy your own inner child and value the child in each other. In experiencing Jerome Berryman's 'Godly Play' together we will be able to examine a model of story sharing which aims to foster the spiritual life of the child. We make connections with recent research findings which indicate that nurturing emotional and spiritual literacy plays a vital part in a child's brain development. There is space to play with new ideas, thoughts and learnings in a group Learning Community.