Cairnmillar INSTITUTE

Counselling and Psychotherapy

Course Information Handbook 2027

Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy CP081
Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy CP082
Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy CP091

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Welcome to The Cairnmillar Institute

Congratulations on your success in obtaining a place in the Counselling and Psychotherapy Postgraduate Program. This course information handbook addresses many aspects and requirements for the suite of nested courses within the program. It should be read in conjunction with the following:

Placement Information Handbook

Unit Outlines

Policies and Procedures

These resources provide all the information you need to successfully navigate your way through the different components of your course. If you find anything missing from these handbooks, please let us know.

The Cairnmillar Institute and staff wish you an enjoyable and rewarding professional experience.



Professor Linda Byrne
Dean, Faculty of Psychology, Counselling and Psychotherapy



Dr Bronte McLeod
Course Coordinator, Counselling and Psychotherapy Postgraduate Program

The Cairnmillar Institute

The vision of the Cairnmillar Institute is for a mentally healthy and resilient Australia. The Institute is an Australian Health Promotion Charity and non-profit body.
Our role is to continue building a responsive mental health sector through quality education, accessible client services, and evidence-based workforce support. Our work at Cairnmillar is underpinned by our values of compassionate engagement, inclusivity and professionalism and a focus on quality and standards. Connection with trusted partners and community, and a focus on being creative problem-solvers is critical to our business development and will directly enhance our client and student experience. We also aim to strengthen our contribution to the body of evidence-driven research that informs community in practice, and education.

Commitment to Decolonising the Curriculum

The Cairnmillar Institute is founded on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and acknowledge their deep, enduring connection to land, waters and community. We acknowledge the richness and value of their accumulated cultural knowledge, spanning vast expanses of time. We extend this respect to all Indigenous Peoples of this continent and all adjacent lands, and to any First Nations Peoples who come across this material.

We are proud to be located in the first Australian State and Territory to enact a Treaty with its First Nations Peoples. We recognise the Gellung Warl, which brings the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, the Nginma Ngainnga Wara which brings oversight and accountability, and the Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna, for truth, healing and reconciliation.

At Cairnmillar, we recognise that the determinants of health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have been decimated by colonisation. The healthcare system has been fraught with racism, bias, and discrimination, and this includes the fields of Psychology, Psychotherapy and Counselling. These disciplines have historically ignored the voices and the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Culture, and their role in healing. This can and must change.

Therefore, the Cairnmillar Institute is committed to decolonising and Indigenising its ways. This is no singular action or strategy, however, or a box that can ever be checked. It involves expanding the curriculum to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, doing and being. It includes embedding genuine consultation and allyship, and reflective and reflexive listening, as we grow and change. It takes uncomfortable realisations and conversations about past and current practices, to offer opportunities for genuine healing and growth within the disciplines. It means expanding the conceptualisation of good mental health to embrace Social and Emotional Wellbeing, into all areas of practice.

All this will take time, deep listening, and profound learning. And at Cairnmillar, we are proud to be a part of this ongoing journey.

Commitment to Lived Experience Inclusion

The Cairnmillar Institute recognises the expertise that comes from lived experience. This includes, but is not limited to, experiences of mental ill-health and recovery, disability, neurodiversity, caring responsibilities, trauma survivorship, alcohol and other drug use, refugee and migration journeys, family and domestic violence, LGBTQIA+ identities, and experiences of racism, poverty or homelessness.

Within psychology, counselling and psychotherapy education, lived-experience knowledge is complementary to professional knowledge and essential to ethical, person-centred, and trauma-informed practice. We are committed to embedding lived-experience leadership, voices and perspectives throughout our teaching, learning, research and placement environments.

Our Principles

1. **Nothing about us without us:** Lived-experience voices inform design, delivery and review of learning.
2. **Safety, consent and choice:** We uphold trauma-informed and rights-based frameworks, participation is voluntary; disclosure is never required; psychological and cultural safety underpin all learning environments.
3. **Recognition and respect:** Lived-experience contributions are acknowledged appropriately in learning activities and materials.
4. **Accessibility and inclusion:** We will strive to apply universal design and equity principles, provide flexible participation modes, and offer reasonable adjustments.
5. **Cultural humility and intersectionality:** We recognise the impact of social determinants, culture, identity and power. We actively challenge stigma, discrimination and bias.
6. **Evidence and improvement:** We evaluate what we do and use student feedback to enhance impact.

What Students Can Expect (Education & Placement)

1. **Curriculum & Teaching:** Integration of lived-experience perspectives, case materials and guest input across relevant units.
2. **Assessment:** Opportunities to demonstrate learning through reflexive, values-aligned tasks that uphold safety and dignity.
3. **Learning Environment:** Clear guidance for respectful dialogue and options for participation that honour autonomy, privacy and cultural safety.
4. **Support & Referral:** Access to wellbeing, accessibility and academic supports; confidential pathways for raising feedback or concerns.
5. **Placement Preparation:** Emphasis on person-centred, culturally safe, and trauma-informed practice, with attention to boundaries, consent, reflective practice and lived-experience-informed engagement in diverse settings.

This commitment applies to all Cairnmillar programs and delivery modes. Students are encouraged to provide feedback through unit evaluations and handbook-listed channels so we can continue to learn from our community and improve together, ensuring that lived experience continues to guide our learning environment and collective practices.

Counselling and Psychotherapy

The Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy is an immersive, integrated, and philosophically coherent program designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and professional capacities required to practice ethically and effectively as counsellors and psychotherapists.

Completed over two years if undertaking full-time study, the program is accredited by both the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) and the Australian Counselling Association (ACA). It builds on and extends the learning undertaken in the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

The program is taught by experienced therapist-academics who are actively engaged in professional practice and work collaboratively to deliver a comprehensive learning experience. Students are supported to develop as reflective, critically discerning, culturally responsive, and inclusive practitioners capable of working effectively in diverse contexts.

With a strong relational focus, the program offers in-depth engagement with the theory and integrative practice of humanistic, process-oriented psychotherapy. This approach incorporates insights from psychodynamic, cognitive, existential, and systemic traditions, drawing on the strengths of each to inform contemporary therapeutic practice.

The curriculum is grounded in evidence-informed principles, including research on the common factors associated with effective counselling and psychotherapy, as well as contemporary developments in trauma theory and practice. Students also gain a strong foundation in the ethical and legal responsibilities of professional practice and develop research skills that support their capacity to contribute to scholarship and learning within the field.

Cairnmillar Institute's reputation as a leader in counselling and psychotherapy education and service delivery enables it to offer one of the few programs of its kind that provides fully supported professional placements. Placement opportunities are sourced through established industry partnerships, ensuring students gain meaningful practical experience in professional settings. In addition, students receive focused individual and group supervision designed to support their professional development and readiness for practice.

For further information about our philosophy of practice, please refer to the Appendices.

Entry Requirements

Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy:

Entry into the Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy program requires:
An Australian Bachelor degree (AQF 7) or comparable undergraduate qualification, in a related discipline (teaching, social work, social sciences, psychology, counselling, or similar) with a minimum grade average of 70% and successful interview by a CMI panel assessing readiness and suitability.

- Prospective students wishing to enroll in the Masters course who have an Australian bachelors (or comparable) in a non-relevant discipline are encouraged to enroll in the graduate diploma to assess their suitability. They may be required to undertake Cairnmillar Institute's Introduction to Counselling Skills and Advanced Counselling Skills short courses prior to the enrolment.
- Students wishing to transfer from the Graduate Diploma into the Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy may apply during the final semester of the Graduate Diploma. Eligible applicants will be assessed by the Course Coordinator and a panel for readiness and suitability, including their demonstrated capacity to meet the Institute's inherent requirements at a level appropriate for entry into the advanced program.
- Students who meet the entry requirements for the Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy may progress to the second year of the program, provided they demonstrate the Institute's inherent requirements at the standard required for advanced-level study. Students who do not meet these progression requirements may be exited from the program with a Graduate Certificate or a Graduate Diploma, where applicable.

* Exceptions to the grade average threshold may be considered, upon application to the Course Coordinator. Applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Course Coordinator and an academic panel.

Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Entry into the Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy program requires:
An Australian Bachelor degree (AQF 7) or comparable undergraduate qualification, in a related discipline (teaching, social work, social sciences, psychology, counselling, or similar)

with a minimum grade average of 60% and successful interview by a CMI panel assessing readiness and suitability.

OR

An Australian Bachelor degree (AQF 7) or comparable undergraduate qualification in any discipline with at least 60% mark-average, successful interview by a CMI panel assessing readiness and suitability AND relevant work experience and/or completion of Cairnmillar Institute's Introduction to Counselling Skills and Advanced Counselling Skills short courses.

OR

An Advanced Diploma (AQF 6) AND significant work experience in a relevant field and successful interview by CMI panel assessing readiness, suitability, and ability to meet the academic demands of the program.

OR

The successful completion of our Graduate Certificate in Counselling and Psychotherapy with a minimum grade average of 60% subject to an interview and the approval of the Course Coordinator.

Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Entry into the Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy program requires: An Australian Bachelor degree (AQF 7) or comparable undergraduate qualification in any discipline with at least a 60% mark-average and successful interview by a CMI panel assessing readiness and suitability. Applicant may be required to undertake Cairnmillar Institute's Introduction to Counselling Skills and Advanced Counselling Skills short courses prior to enrolment.

OR

A Diploma (AQF 6) AND at least one year of work experience in a relevant field AND successful interview by CMI panel assessing readiness, suitability, and ability to meet the academic requirements of the program. Applicant may be encouraged to undertake Cairnmillar Institute's Introduction to Counselling Skills and Advanced Counselling Skills short courses prior to enrolment.

OR

Significant work experience in a relevant field and successful interview by CMI panel assessing readiness, suitability, and ability to meet the academic requirements of the

program. Applicant may be encouraged to undertake Cairnmillar Institute's Introduction to Counselling Skills and Advanced Counselling Skills short courses prior to enrolment.

Applicants must demonstrate an ability to meet the Institute's inherent requirements to be offered a place in any course within the C&P suite of programs. CMI's inherent requirement policy can be found on the Institute's website, or by following this link: https://www.cairnmillar.org.au/ir/.

Personal Qualities of Successful Applicants

The reputation of the Cairnmillar Institute rests ultimately with the quality of the students that graduate from our courses. The Training Standards of the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA), the accrediting body for counselling and psychotherapy courses in Australia, highlight the requirement of prospective students and graduates to demonstrate qualities of self-awareness, reflective and relational capacities, and a certain level of emotional maturity resulting from integrated life experience.

Desired qualities and attributes we look for in our students include:

- Empathy and the ability to understand and connect with others.
- Authenticity, courage, and integrity.
- Self-awareness and a reflective, self-responsive attitude.
- Genuine interest in personal growth.
- A sincere interest in the wellbeing of others.
- A diversity in professional and life experience.
- Adaptability / cognitive flexibility / openness to experience / high tolerance for ambiguity.
- Evidence of an ability to recognise and respond reasonably to ethical concerns.
- An appreciation of diversity and of perspectives and life experiences different to your own.
- Intellectual curiosity and an orientation towards learning from others.
- Reasonable academic ability, time management and organisational skills.
- Sufficient self-regulation of emotional arousal to safely navigate the demands of the course.

Duration of the Course

Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy: 2 years full-time or 4 years part-time
Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy: 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy: 1 year part-time

Graduate Learning Outcomes

Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Students who satisfactorily complete the Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy should be able to:

- Develop an effective therapeutic alliance and facilitative therapeutic relationship.
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of issues of power in the therapeutic
- relationship.
- Critically evaluate and compare the theories and models of the different schools
- of therapy and apply them to provided case study material.
- Effectively utilise the key theoretical concepts, apply therapeutic attitudes, and counselling skills to facilitate change.
- Critically evaluate the application of the core clinical processes taught.
- Demonstrate self-awareness and an ability to self-reflect.
- Demonstrate cultural awareness, humility and respect for diversity.

Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Students who satisfactorily complete the Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy should have the professional capabilities to:

- Critically review and effectively utilise the knowledge of the major schools of counselling and psychotherapy and relevant research in counselling assessment and treatment planning, while working with a range of presenting problems across the lifespan.
- Develop an effective therapeutic alliance, select, and apply appropriate processes and counselling interventions to facilitate change and achieve client goals.
- Apply the principles of trauma-informed and recovery-oriented practice in working with people struggling with mental ill-health.
- Demonstrate knowledge and application of the PACFA and ACA Codes of Ethics and professional conduct guidelines and of relevant State and Commonwealth legislation.
- Demonstrate a capacity for self-awareness, self-reflection and reflexivity, as well as cognitive flexibility and an ability to tolerate ambivalence.
- Consider the impact of systemic and structural issues of power on mental health.
- Demonstrate cultural awareness, humility and responsiveness when engaging diverse identities.

Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Students who satisfactorily complete the Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy should have the professional capabilities to:

- Critically review and effectively utilise the knowledge of the major schools of counselling and psychotherapy, as they apply to assessment, case conceptualisation, and treatment planning, in the context of a range of presenting concerns across the life span.
- Develop an effective therapeutic alliance; select and competently apply advanced counselling and psychotherapy processes, to facilitate change and achieve client goals.
- Demonstrate an ability to evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic processes.
- Develop an attitude of reflective practice in which self-awareness, reflectiveness and reflexivity are demonstrated and in which continuous personal and professional development are autonomously sought and engaged.
- Identify, analyse, and resolve complex ethical and professional dilemmas while applying knowledge of different ethical paradigms, relevant codes of ethics and professional conduct, and relevant State and Commonwealth legislation.
- Demonstrate embodied cultural humility and culturally responsive practice when engaging diverse identities within therapeutic contexts.
- Consider the limitations of specific research methods and demonstrate an ability to choose methods appropriate to specific research aims and objectives.
- Critically engage with research literature and conduct a literature review.
- Develop critical thinking skills in qualitative and quantitative research.
- Complete a research proposal relevant to counselling and psychotherapy practice.

Career Opportunities

Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy and Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Graduates of these courses may find employment in a variety of settings including community health and community services organisations, agencies, rehabilitation providers, human resource management, child protection, family support counselling services, allied clinics and services, and private practice.

Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Although graduates from this course will not be able to work independently in the field of counselling, they will learn additional communication and relational skills that may enhance their current work skills. With that, they may find employment in some community health and community services organisations.

Graduates of this program may be eligible to apply for entry into the Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

More information about career pathways can be found on myCMI.

Professional Recognition

The **Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy** is accredited by both the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) and by the Australian Counselling Association (ACA).

The **Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy** is accredited by the Australian Counselling Association (ACA).

The **Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy** course units form part of the nested suite of study within the Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy. Further study (at least to the Graduate Diploma level) is required to meet the professional training standards of the Australian Counselling Association (ACA).

More information about professional registration can be found on myCMI: Professional Registration FAQs on myCMI.

Course Structure & Credit Points

Course Pathways

Our Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy is a nested suite of postgraduate programs with two early exit points. The Graduate Certificate (AQF Level 8) is nested within the Graduate Diploma (AQF Level 8), which is in turn nested within the Master's program (AQF Level 9).

All students commence the program together. Where eligible, students enrolled in the Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma can apply to transfer into the Graduate Diploma or Master's, respectively, upon completion.

The Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy is accredited by both the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) and the Australian Counselling Association (ACA).

The Graduate Diploma is accredited by the Australian Counselling Association (ACA).

Unit Code	Unit Name				Semester
CAP406	Foundations of Counselling Practice	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma	Masters	1
CAP402	Person-Centred Counselling				1
CAP404	Emotion-Focused Therapy Level 1				2
CAP405	Cognitive Behavioural Therapies				2
CAP412	Ethical and Professional Practice				1
CAP413	Counselling Practice with Children and Young People				1
CAP418	Assessment and Treatment Planning				2
CAP461	Placement 1				2
CAP513	Family Systemic Approaches to Counselling				1
CAP551	Research Methods and Project				1
CAP511	Interpersonal Processes in Psychotherapy				1
CAP504	Emotion-Focused Therapy Level 2				1
CAP510	Trauma, Loss, and Grief				2
CAP506	Existential Psychotherapy and the Group Process				2
CAP507	Brief Dynamic Psychotherapy				2
CAP561	Placement 2				2

Note: The course structure presented applies to students commencing the Graduate Certificate and/or Graduate Diploma in 2027. Students enrolled in the outgoing Master's program during 2027 will complete CAP509 Child and Family. CAP513 will not be offered until 2028 and will therefore apply only to students commencing under the revised course structure from that year onward.

Course Credit Point Structure

Counselling and Psychotherapy Program Sequence			
Semester	**Unit Code**	**Unit Title**	**Credit Points**
Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy			
1	CAP406	Foundations of Counselling Practice	12.5
1	CAP402	Person-Centred Counselling	12.5
2	CAP404	Emotion-Focused Therapy Level 1	12.5
2	CAP405	Cognitive Behavioural Therapies	12.5
			Total Credit Points: 50
Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy			
1	CAP412	Ethical and Professional Practice	12.5
1	CAP413	Counselling Practice with Children and Young People	12.5
2	CAP418	Assessment and Treatment Planning	12.5
2	CAP461	Placement 1	12.5
			Total Credit Points: 100
Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy			
1	CAP513	Family Systemic Approaches to Counselling	12.5
1	CAP551	Research Methods and Project	12.5
1	CAP511	Interpersonal Processes in Psychotherapy	12.5
1	CAP504	Emotion-Focused Therapy Level 2	12.5
2	CAP510	Trauma, Loss and Grief Therapy	12.5
2	CAP506	Existential Psychotherapy and the Group Process	12.5
2	CAP507	Brief Dynamic Psychotherapy	12.5
2	CAP561	Placement 2	12.5
			Total Credit Points: 200

Study Load

A full-time study load is four units per Semester. A part-time study load is typically two units per Semester. Each unit has a workload of 3 timetabled hours per week + 7-9 hours per week of personal study time = average of 10-12 hours per week per unit of study. This equates to a minimum study load of 40 hours per week. It is recommended that students enrolled in applied units set aside 3 hours per week outside of class times to allow for additional practice time.

Students wishing to make changes to their study load and part-time students commencing their Masters year are asked to arrange a time with the Course Coordinator to discuss a study plan.

Pre-requisite workshops for students commencing placement are run during Semester breaks, one of which will incur an additional nominal fee to attend. If you are scheduled to commence placement, please contact the C&P Placement Coordinator — pccap@cairnmillar.edu.au — to inquire about scheduled workshop dates, costs and alternatives, before booking your holidays.

Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy:

Course Details:	50 credit points (available part-time only)
Coursework:	50 credit points or 100% of the course
Prerequisite Unit/s:	CAP402 is a prerequisite for CAP404

The Graduate Certificate of Counselling and Psychotherapy can only be taken part-time, as outlined above.

Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy:

Course Details:	100 credit points
Coursework:	87.5 credit points or 87.5% of the course
Practical Placement:	12.5 credit points or 12.5% of the course
Prerequisite Unit/s:	CAP402 is a prerequisite for CAP404
	CAP406, CAP402, and CAP412 are prerequisites for CAP461
	CAP418 is a corequisite for CAP461

The Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Psychotherapy can be taken full-time or parttime. Students undertaking the degree full-time would enrol in two Graduate Certificate and two Graduate Diploma units per Semester, as outlined in the table on page 17.

Students undertaking the degree part-time would enrol in two Graduate Certificate units per Semester in their first year of part-time study, and two Graduate Diploma units per Semester in their second year of part-time study.

Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Course Details:	200 credit points
Coursework:	50 credit points or 50% of the course
Research:	12.5 credit points
Practical Placement:	25 credit points or 25% of the course
Prerequisite Unit/s:	CAP402 is a prerequisite for CAP404 CAP404 is a prerequisite for CAP504 CAP406, CAP402, and CAP412 are prerequisites for CAP461 (Placement 1) CAP418 is a corequisite for CAP461 CAP461 is a prerequisite for CAP561 (Placement 2)

The Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy can be taken full-time or part-time. Students undertaking the degree full-time would enrol in two Graduate Certificate and two Graduate Diploma units per Semester, as outlined in the table on page 16, in their first year of study. Students would then undertake four Master's level units per Semester in their second year of study. Students undertaking the degree part-time would enrol in two Graduate Certificate units per Semester in their first year of parttime study, and two Graduate Diploma units per Semester in their second year of parttime study. They would then undertake two Master's level units per Semester in their third and fourth years of study.

Coursework Units

Each of the units of study are detailed below. Please note students must pass all assessments to pass a unit, and all units before being eligible to graduate.

- **CAP406 Foundations of Counselling Practice**

This unit introduces foundational counselling knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions through a person-centred and humanistic-experiential framework. Students develop an understanding of the therapeutic relationship as the foundation of effective counselling practice and are introduced to reflective and reflexive practice, ethical decision making, professional identity, contemporary perspectives on counselling effectiveness, and the relationship between theory, research, and practice. The unit is organised around three core domains of counselling practice: thinking, listening, and professional communication.

Students learn how counsellors make sense of client concerns, engage in purposeful and empathic helping conversations, and communicate effectively with clients, supervisors, and other professionals. They develop foundational competencies in attending, empathic listening, reflective responding, introductory case conceptualisation, documentation, and record keeping. Building on these foundations, students are introduced to the theory and practice of an evidence-informed brief intervention approach commonly used in counselling practice. Through observation, skills practice, feedback, deliberate practice, and reflection, students develop confidence in conducting focused helping conversations that support client strengths, autonomy, and change.

- **CAP402 Person-Centred Counselling**

This unit introduces students to the relational concepts, attitudes and practices of humanistic psychotherapies with a focus on Person-Centred Counselling and Psychotherapy and the work of its founder, Carl Rogers. The unit aims to assist students in developing therapeutic presence. Students are introduced to the 'counsellor's use of self' as a central concept in counselling and self-reflection, and self-reflection is encouraged as a source of important emergent information. It provides the foundational tools and 'way of being' to facilitate a meaningful, process-oriented, therapeutic encounter and supports students in developing their competencies as reflexive practitioners. The concepts, skills, and attitudes introduced in this unit are contextualised within contemporary developments in the approach and within common factors research which examines factors contributing to successful therapeutic outcomes across modalities. The theoretical learning and discussions will be accompanied by weekly practicums focused on skills development.

- **CAP404 Emotion-Focused Therapy Level 1**

This unit introduces students to the theory and practice of Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT), building on the humanistic and person-centred foundations developed in *CAP402 Person-Centred Counselling*. EFT is an evidence-based, structured, task-based approach embedded in humanistic values, offering a clear framework for working directly with emotional experience. Grounded in emotion theory, EFT is a well-researched approach with demonstrated effectiveness in treating depression, anxiety, eating disorders, PTSD, complex PTSD, and other trauma-related difficulties. Learning in this unit is experiential and process-focused, with an emphasis on developing practical skills for working with emotions and facilitating emotional change. Students learn key EFT tasks, including Focusing, Systematic Evocative Unfolding, and Two-Chair and Empty-Chair work, alongside foundational skills in assessment of emotional productivity and case formulation. Teaching is highly interactive, combining brief lectures, demonstrations, and extensive supervised practice. Completion of

this unit fulfils the first half of the basic training requirement for international certification as an Emotion-Focused Therapist.

- **CAP405 Cognitive Behavioural Therapies**

This unit introduces students to the three waves of Cognitive Behavioural Therapies, with a focus on the mindfulness-informed Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Cognitive Behaviour Therapies (CBT) is an umbrella term used to define a range of evidence informed, outcomes-focused cognitive and behavioural therapies. Cognitive Behaviour Therapies broadly attribute emotional and functional difficulties to learned habitual thoughts and actions, and work towards changing thoughts and action (or our relationship with them) to improve outcomes. ACT is a third wave behaviour therapy that assists clients in applying mindfulness and acceptance skills to their responses so that they can make better choices and behave in ways that are more consistently aligned with their values. In this practical unit, students will gain experience in applying and evaluating their skills across the six core processes of ACT.

- **CAP412 Ethical and Professional Practice**

This unit emphasises the personal attributes and professional competencies required to practice ethically and legally as a counsellor and psychotherapist. Students will be introduced to different ethical frameworks and decision-making models. The development of ethical mindfulness and an integrated ethical stance is central to this unit. Students will work through case studies and examine a variety of professional situations in class to increase their ethical sensitivity, decision-making skills and ability to take ethical action, including in the context of issues of power, culture and diversity. Students will also develop an understanding of best practice in relation to online and in relation to professional ethical obligations such as duty of care, confidentiality, informed consent, mandatory reporting and record keeping.

- **CAP413 Counselling Practice with Children and Young People**

This unit develops foundational knowledge and skills for counselling school-aged children, adolescents and young people up to 25 years of age. Grounded in a person-centred, humanistic and relational framework, the unit examines the developmental, relational, cultural and social contexts that shape young people's wellbeing and lived experiences. Students explore developmental theory, attachment, trauma, and family systems perspectives, and apply biopsychosocial and 5P frameworks to develop collaborative, strengths-based, and developmentally responsive understandings of young people's

concerns. The unit emphasises therapeutic relationship-building and the application of person-centred and humanistic counselling practices that recognise the strengths, voice, agency, and unique developmental needs of children and young people. Students also examine culturally responsive, culturally safe, family-inclusive and trauma-informed practice, including work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and diverse communities. Legal, ethical, and professional responsibilities are explored within the Australian context, including consent, confidentiality, safeguarding, risk assessment, and collaboration with families and other professionals.

- **CAP418 Assessment and Treatment Planning**

This unit integrates assessment, risk assessment, case conceptualisation, and treatment planning in counselling and psychotherapy through recovery-oriented, trauma-informed, anti-oppressive, culturally responsive, and decolonising frameworks. Students critically examine dominant approaches to mental health, distress, risk, and recovery, and explore how power, privilege, marginalisation, colonisation, and systemic inequities shape wellbeing and therapeutic outcomes. Students develop skills in conducting collaborative, culturally responsive assessments and creating ethical, evidence-informed case conceptualisations and treatment plans that centre client voice, strengths, lived experience, and self-determination. Drawing on contemporary counselling and psychotherapy approaches, students learn to formulate and adapt interventions and risk management strategies for a range of presenting concerns and diverse practice contexts. Throughout the unit, emphasis is placed on critical self-reflection, professional judgement, and socially just practice that recognises the individual, relational, community, and structural influences on wellbeing and recovery.

- **CAP461 Counselling Placement 1**

This unit immerses students in the practical world of counselling through a comprehensive placement experience, offering invaluable benefits that extend beyond theoretical learning. Students will gain hands-on experience, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings and enhance their practical skills and competence. Direct interaction with clients will deepen students' understanding of the complexities of client concerns and will enhance their ability to provide effective support. Exposure to diverse client populations and real-world ethical dilemmas will cultivate a strong ethical framework and foster the development of cultural humility and responsiveness. The challenges and experiences encountered during placement will also contribute to personal and professional growth by fostering independence and resilience. Placements ground students' experience in the work itself, leading to deeper commitments to the counselling profession. Placements are a vital

component in upholding high professional standards in the counselling field. Placement consists of appropriately 140 hours of work integrated learning at a placement agency, that includes a minimum of 40 client contact hours. Mandatory preplacement workshops are run during the Semester breaks. Some of these incur nominal fees. For further information about the pre-placement workshops contact the C&P Placement Coordinator pc-cap@cairnmillar.edu.au. For more information about your placements, please refer to the C&P Placement Information Handbook for more information.

- **CAP513 Family Systemic Approaches to Counselling**

This unit provides students with the opportunity to complement their humanistic practice by broadening their perspective to include developmental and systemic lenses. Building on the foundations introduced in *CAP413 Counselling Practice with Children and Young People*, students integrate these perspectives into counselling practice with families and kinship networks across the lifespan, including diverse family structures, relationship constellations, and cultural contexts. Systemic and developmental concepts are applied to assessment, case conceptualisation, and intervention. Students use genograms to examine how relationships, beliefs, developmental experiences, and interactional patterns are shaped across generations and influence wellbeing, distress, and change. The unit explores common presentations and their legal, ethical, cultural, and developmental considerations when working with families, couples, and diverse kinship networks. Students are also introduced to the foundations of working with couples and intimate relationships, with and without children, and explore practical interventions drawn from family, couple, and systemically-informed counselling approaches. Through skills practice, reflection, and application, students develop the foundational knowledge and skills required for ethical and collaborative systemically-informed practice.

- **CAP551 Research Methods and Project**

The aim of this unit is to introduce students to the scientific research process and provide an overview of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. It focuses on conceptual, practical, and ethical issues in the research process. A key aim of the unit is to provide an understanding of how research is designed to address specific research questions in response to broader social issues. Relevant ethical, contextual, and cultural issues are also addressed in this unit.

- **CAP511 Interpersonal Processes in Psychotherapy**

The aim of this unit is to assist students in developing an in-depth understanding of the

theoretical and empirical basis for a relational, interpersonal process focus in counselling and psychotherapy. This advanced clinical training provides an integrative treatment approach that draws from humanistic-existential, cognitive-behavioural and psychodynamic approaches and highlights the use of the process dimension to facilitate change. Students will learn to utilise an understanding of attachment styles, clients' internal working models and external relational patterns, to provide immediacy-based interventions and facilitate an effective therapeutic process.

- **CAP504 Emotion-Focused Therapy Level 2**

This unit extends and brings nuance to students' theoretical understanding and clinical application of Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT). Building on *CAP404 Emotion-Focused Therapy Level 1*, it deepens core therapeutic skills—particularly empathy, presence, emotional tracking, and attunement—while introducing EFT-informed case formulation for more complex work. The unit focuses on advanced emotional change processes, emotion schemes, micro-tasks, and case formulation within the EFT model. Students develop greater precision in perceptive skills, confidence in recognising emotional micro-markers and greater capacity to respond effectively to emotional experience and pain. Key EFT interventions—including Focusing, Two-Chair and Empty-Chair work, and Systematic Evocative Unfolding—are revisited with attention to task structure, stages of intervention, and phases of treatment. Emphasis is placed on working with depression and anxiety, as well as differentiating common EFT conflict splits, including coaching, motivational, decisional, anxiety, and depressive splits. Learning is strongly experiential, supported by concise lectures, guided reflection, and extensive small group skills practice. Completion of this unit fulfils the basic training requirement for international certification as an Emotion-Focused Therapist.

- **CAP510 Trauma, Loss and Grief Therapy**

The aim of this subject is to examine the phenomenology of traumatic stress experience, the theories that explain it and various selected approaches to its treatment, including loss- and grief-related aspects. The unit covers cognitive/meaning-making, emotional, somatosensory, interpersonal, cross generational and collective aspects of traumatic experience. Diagnostic categories and approaches to formulation which are often applied to such experiences will be discussed. A variety of contemporary treatment approaches for trauma are covered.

- **CAP506 Existential Psychotherapy and the Group Process**

This unit is taught in the format of an experiential group, with a focus on relationship. The group experience is explored in the context of its connection to existentially informed group theory. The purpose of this highly experiential unit is to advance the students' intellectual and personally located knowledge of the various ways that the European and American schools of existential psychotherapy have both challenged traditional psychological frameworks of therapy and the person and opened new possibilities for the way individual and group psychotherapy might be understood and practiced. Relevant group theory and the themes of death, freedom, responsibility, isolation and meaninglessness will be explored as central concepts for the psychotherapist as they strive to examine human existence and the inevitable dilemmas of living in the world.

- **CAP507 Brief Dynamic Psychotherapy**

Brief dynamic psychotherapy is widely accepted short-term and effective distillation of key psychodynamic concepts, aimed at allowing clients to make significant changes in both their intrapersonal and interpersonal styles of relating. The approach allows the meaning beneath current interpersonal problems to be explored, by working to uncover deeper feelings, patterns of intra-personal conflict and thoughts that interfere with a client's relationships. This unit offers in-depth training in the core competencies and theoretical components of the approach.

- **CAP561 Counselling Placement 2**

Through this placement, students will have the opportunity to apply the deeper theoretical knowledge and enhanced competencies, interventions, and techniques developed over the progression of their studies in real-world settings. Students will receive more developed feedback in their supervisory relationships to refine their approaches and build confidence in their abilities. The placement offers valuable networking opportunities, connecting students with professionals across various counselling environments. Completing this placement ensures students are career-ready and meet accreditation standards.

Students should also refer to the relevant **Unit Outlines** located on Canvas.

Placements

For information regarding placements, please refer to the Placement Information Handbook.

Enrolment Conditions

See also: Enrolment Conditions on myCMI for a copy of the current enrolment conditions. You must agree to the conditions of enrolment every time you enrol in a unit of study.

Attendance

It is an expectation that students will attend all classes*. While every effort should be made to attend all classes, students are required to attend a minimum of 80% of classes. If you anticipate being absent, please advise your Unit Coordinator via email. Planned absences of several weeks should also be discussed with your Unit Coordinator.

Note: We consider classes* to include synchronous online activities such as tutorials and lectures held in online platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams in addition to in-person, face-to-face scheduled activities.

Student Etiquette

Students are to adhere to relevant ethical guidelines and codes of conduct and show respect for staff, clients, and other students, and our faculty environment at all times. All forms of sexual harassment, vilification, and discrimination will not be tolerated.

Your enrolment carries inherent requirements that reflect the professional standards you will be expected to meet in practice. If you are studying in a postgraduate psychology program requiring provisional or general registration with AHPRA, you must familiarise yourself with, and adhere to, the Psychology Board of Australia's Code of Conduct. If you are enrolled in counselling or psychotherapy programs, you must ensure your conduct aligns with PACFA's Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct. Understanding and upholding these obligations is essential to your progression in the course and to your future professional practice.
Students are expected to communicate with professionalism, courtesy and consideration in person and online (including via email and social media). Please see the TLP004 Academic Integrity and Student Conduct Policy, TLP008 Student Social Media policy, and FSP002 Discrimination Bullying Harassment Policy. All Policies and Procedures can be found here.

If you feel unsafe at any time or have concerns about the professional conduct of any member of the Cairnmillar community, you are encouraged to inform a staff member.

Engagement in Experiential Learning Activities

Experiential learning activities form an integral component of the Counselling and Psychotherapy Postgraduate Program and its units. Students are required to read the Guidance for Engagement in Experiential Learning Activities and complete the accompanying Student Acknowledgement and Consent form. Further information can be found in the Appendices.

Submission of Written Work

All written assessment tasks, unless otherwise instructed by a unit coordinator, must be prepared in Microsoft Word and submitted via Canvas. Please refer to the Unit Outlines on within the unit modules on Canvas and the Assessment Style Guides and Formatting guide on myCMI for more information on written assignment requirements.

Marking of Assessments

Assignments submitted through Canvas will be marked electronically and returned through Canvas.

Students, if they have grounds, may ask for additional feedback or a remark on any assessment. Re-marking is, however, not guaranteed and it is important to realise that your request may be declined. More information can be found in the Assessment Policy and on myCMI.

Word Limit

Students must adhere to the word limits provided in Unit Outlines and Assessment Guides. Please refer to your Unit Outlines on Canvas for information regarding word limits for each assessment task. There is a 10% leeway on all word limits in which no penalties apply. Exceeding the word limit+10% will result in a penalty of 10% of the total assessment mark. For example, for an assessment with 1000 words worth 20 marks, a student can write up to 1100 words without penalty. However, the student will incur a 10% penalty of the total assessment mark (10% of 20 marks = 2 mark penalty) if they write 1101 words.

Referencing & Style Guidelines

The referencing and format for all assignments must be in APA 7 style. Please see APA Style Referencing. See also Assessment Style Guides and Formatting on myCMI.

Assessment Grades & Records

Final results for each unit will be calculated, then published on the Paradigm Enrolment Portal by the relevant results publication date. The marks for your final assessment will be withheld until after the release of your final marks.

See myCMI for information on results publication.

Extensions

An extension may be granted up to 14 calendar days for assignments where there is evidence of unexpected disruptions in the student's available work time. Extensions must be applied for and approved in accordance with the Assessment Policy and Procedures and any other published procedures found on the faculty website. Applications must be made via the appropriate form before the due date and submitted to the Unit Coordinator. An extension is valid only after it has been approved by the Unit Coordinator. See myCMI for more information on how to apply for an assignment extension.

For students with an ongoing or short-term health, injury or disability that impacts their ability to study, academic support, including extensions, may be available by registering with the Learning Equity Office. For further information please click here.

Special Consideration

Special consideration may be granted in situations where an extension is not possible, such as an exam or in-class work that has been missed, or you need an extension beyond 2 weeks. You should first discuss your situation with your Course Coordinator before applying. Please see the Assessment Policy and Procedures found on the faculty website for more information. Please see myCMI for how to apply for special consideration.

Late Submissions

The penalty for late submissions is 5% per day of the total assessment mark (including weekends and non-business days), for a maximum of seven (7) days (i.e., maximum late penalty deduction possible is 35%).

Work handed in more than one week late will not be marked and a fail result will be recorded. No assignment will be accepted once the results for that assignment have been published.

Tasks that are required to be completed and/or submitted in-class, such as class presentations must be submitted on the date of the class presentation unless a student has been granted special consideration. The penalty for late submission or non-submission of in-class tasks is usually 100% of the mark.

See also: Late Assessment Submissions on myCMI.

Samples of Work

Samples of student work may be taken for purposes of course accreditation and benchmarking. In all cases anonymity will be preserved. If you object to your work being copied for this purpose you must advise the Unit Coordinator when submitting assignments.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process where a student may be granted credit or partial credit towards a qualification in recognition of previous study, skills or experience. RPL can only be granted for units prior to the commencement of your course.

See myCMI for more information on how to apply for RPL or credit transfer.

Marking Scales & Grade Definitions

You can view Cairnmillar's grade-mark schema on myCMI.

Academic Integrity

Breaches of academic integrity are serious academic offences. It is the responsibility of all students to access, read, and familiarise themselves with the Institute's Academic Integrity and Student Conduct Policy and Procedures. See myCMI for more information about Academic Integrity at Cairnmillar.

All students must complete an Academic Integrity Module and Quiz on Canvas prior to beginning classes at Cairnmillar. Assessment marks are withheld if students have not completed the Academic Integrity Module and Quiz on Canvas. Please see here on myCMI for more details.

GenAI Statement

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the landscape of higher education, especially in how we approach assessment design, academic integrity, research, and student engagement. Staying informed about these changes is crucial for all students. Students are to read and understand the Student Guide: Ethical and Effective Use of AI in Higher Education [provide a link], and ensure that they check the requirements for any assignments that they complete.

Cairnmillar students are encouraged to develop their digital literacy and responsible GenAI skills, including understanding when, why and how to use GenAI. At the Cairnmillar Institute, several courses support the use of research-orientated GenAI tools such as NotebookLM, ChatGPT, Research Rabbit, Elicit AI and Consensus to scaffold skills in evidence synthesis, and scholarly exploration. These tools are used to complement, not replace, students' independent thinking and professional judgement. Appropriate use can include but not limited to, brainstorming of ideas, getting feedback, and clarifying concepts. However, GenAI can also produce inaccurate information, reinforce bias and/or oversimplify concepts. Students should be particularly cautious when using GenAI as the less expertise you have in an area the greater the risk to over rely on these tools. For more information, including example acknowledgement statements of GenAI use, please refer to the student policy on GenAI use.

All students are responsible for ensuring that their academic work reflects their own understanding and meets the standards of integrity, originality and ethical conduct required both in academic study and future professional contexts. Transparent use of GenAI includes acknowledging tools used, describing how they supported your work where required and following any assessment specific instructions. Misuse of GenAI, including unacknowledged or excessive reliance on GenAI tools, will be treated as academic misconduct. Inappropriate or unethical use can undermine the development of essential skills and professional judgement expected of Cairnmillar graduates.

Cairnmillar monitors GenAI use through established integrity processes and provides guidance to support responsible and transparent practice. If in doubt, students should seek guidance from academic staff, our student learning support advisors, or refer to specific in-unit policies.

Course Progress

The Academic Integrity and Progress Committee (AIPC) is a sub-committee of the Academic Board and is normally chaired by the Dean.

The AIPC review incidents of possible plagiarism and other breaches of academic or research integrity, such as collusion, cheating in exams, or unauthorised AI use.

The AIPC also supports students who have poor academic performance or are at risk of failing a course through an academic progress intervention and Student Progress Agreements.

Please see 'Academic Integrity and Progress Review Hearings' on myCMI for detailed information on Cairnmillar's academic integrity and progress procedure.

Policies, Procedures & Student Guidelines

It is the responsibility of all students to access, read, and familiarise themselves with the Institute's Policies and Procedures. Students are also expected to review and understand any student guidelines. These are published on our faculty website. Detailed supporting information, guides and forms can be found on the student website, myCMI.

Copyright

There are copyright laws that we need to be aware of and adhere to. Please see the Australian Copyright Council's website for full information on this topic.

Professional Standards

Students in professional training courses at CMI are reminded that inherent requirements apply to your enrolment.

You must have a thorough knowledge of the Psychology Board of Australia Code of Conduct or the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia Code of Ethics document. It is reviewed and updated regularly, and it is essential to remain abreast of any changes that are recommended.

A full copy of the current edition of the Code of Conduct can be obtained on the Psychology Board of Australia or the PACFA website.

Student Support, Counselling, & Wellbeing

Counselling & Support for Students

Please see 'Counselling for Students' on myCMI.

Academic & Writing Support for Students

Please see 'Your Academic Skills Toolkit' on Canvas and the Academic Kills and Support my.CMI page.

Learning Equity and Accessibility Support for Students

Please see 'Learning Equity Support' on myCMI.

International Student Support
Please see the 'International Students Page' on myCMI.

Other Support Services

A searchable list of other support services can be found on myCMI. Please see Support for Students page.

Tuition Fees and FEE-HELP

Information regarding the payment of fees can be obtained from myCMI and our public website. Tuition fees and conditions are published on our website, see Tuition Fees. Please see Fees and FEE-HELP FAQs on myCMI for more information. Non-payment of fees may result in withholding of release of grades, ineligibility to graduate or suspension and/or termination of enrolment.

Termination of Enrolment

Cairnmillar reserves the right to terminate a person's enrolment in a course if the student:

- fails to meet the complete assessment task requirements or breaches the Institute's privacy and ethical conditions
- exceeds the maximum or negotiated time for completion of the course, or
- other conditions as specified in the Enrolment Conditions.

See myCMI for details on Cairnmillar's Academic Progress procedure.

Graduation

To be eligible to have the relevant qualification awarded, a student must:

- comply with all the Institute Policies and Procedures;
- pay all relevant fees and charges;
- complete all requirements prescribed for the course of study at least at a PASS level;
- complete the Academic Integrity and Indigenous Cultural Awareness modules; and
- register to graduate once eligiblity is confirmed by the due date.

The appropriate awards are given on satisfactory completion of the course. These are presented at a special annual ceremony or can be posted directly to students for a fee.

For more information see: Graduating From Your Degree on myCMI.

Library Services

The Library at the Cairnmillar Institute is a specialist library resource, aimed at supporting the work of the Institute, focusing on the curriculum, teaching, research, and clinical requirements of the students, academic staff, clinical staff, and researchers.

Appointments about Library and research skills can be made through the Library.

Please visit the Library page on myCMI for more information.

Office 365

All students have access to Office 365 while studying at Cairnmillar. Your Office365 account includes free access to Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook (student email), and much more.

Students also have access to 1TB of OneDrive storage, and are encouraged to save any work related to Cairnmillar and their studies to their Cairnmillar OneDrive. Find more information on Office 365 on myCMI.

Student Email and Canvas Announcements

Students are provided with a Cairnmillar student email and are required to check this account regularly while enrolled. Any communications with the Institute and its staff should be made through official Cairnmillar student email accounts, and all formal communications to students regarding their studies will be sent to Cairnmillar email addresses once and while enrolled. See: Accessing your Cairnmillar Student Email on myCMI for full details.

Students should also regularly check or sign up for email reminders on Canvas Announcements and review the regular Student Newsletter.

Computer & Printer Access

Each student has their own personal OneDrive account which can be accessed across any computer.

Please see 'Computer Access at Cairnmillar' for more information.

Please see 'Printing/Copying at Cairnmillar' on myCMI for more information.

Appendices

Philosophy of Practice Statement

Relational-Dialectical Humanistic Approach in Counselling and Psychotherapy

The Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy program at Cairnmillar is founded on a relational-dialectical humanistic philosophy of practice. Our philosophy recognises the inherent worth, resilience, and capacity for growth and self-actualisation in both our students and their future clients. We believe in the transformative power of the therapeutic encounter to promote healing, facilitate personal transformation, mobilise social change, and foster a sense of purpose and meaning in life.

Humanistic Principles

Person-Centred Approach: We prioritise the clients' unique experiences, perspectives, and needs. Our aim is to create a safe and non-judgmental space where clients can access unprocessed emotions and emergent experience and explore their thoughts, feelings, and challenges openly. We believe that individuals have the innate capacity for self-understanding and growth, and we strive to facilitate their self-discovery and self-actualisation.

Growth and Self-Actualisation: We view personal growth and the movement towards it, as fundamental to the human experience. Self-actualisation is seen as the process of developing the self-acceptance, tolerance for vulnerability, courage and flexibility to be equal to all circumstances. Our approach encourages clients to access and process experience, explore their potential and develop their strengths, and to live more congruently and purposefully. We support clients in processing experience, gaining insight, building resilience, and fostering a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their lives.

Relational Focus: We understand the therapeutic relationship as a central catalyst for change. We emphasise the importance of a genuine and empathic connection between the therapist and the client. Through fostering trust, mutual respect, and collaboration, we create a supportive environment that encourages clients to explore their emotions, values, and relationships. We believe that healing and growth occur within the context of meaningful connections.

Holistic Perspective: We recognise the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit in

individuals' well-being. Our approach encompasses the exploration of emotional, cognitive, behavioural, somatic, and spiritual dimensions. We encourage clients to develop self-awareness, practice self-care, and embrace their whole selves. By addressing the whole person, we aim to promote balance, authenticity, and overall mental and emotional wellness.

Cultivation of Empathy and Acceptance: We believe that empathy, unconditional positive regard, and acceptance are essential elements in the therapeutic process. Our practitioners strive to understand clients' experiences from their unique perspectives without judgment. By creating a safe and non-threatening environment, we support clients in exploring their emotions, challenges, and personal growth without fear of criticism or rejection.

Cultural Humility and Responsive Practice: We embrace cultural diversity and recognise the influence of social, cultural, and systemic factors on individuals' lives. We strive to understand the impact of culture, race, gender, sexuality, and other identities on clients' experiences and tailor our interventions accordingly. We are committed to fostering inclusivity, cultural humility, and social justice in our practice.

Lifelong Learning and Professional Development: We recognise that the field of counselling and psychotherapy is continually evolving. We are committed to providing our students with a solid foundation of knowledge, skills, and ethical principles. We encourage ongoing learning, professional development, and self-reflection to enhance our practitioners' effectiveness and ethical practice.

Dialectic Principles

These dialectical principles provide a framework for understanding and analysing complex phenomena and for fostering deeper levels of comprehension and synthesis. They promote a dynamic and inclusive approach to thinking and problem-solving, enabling individuals to engage with complexity, contradictions, and change in various domains of knowledge and life.

Contradiction and Unity of Opposites: Dialectics recognises that ‘polarities’ or contradictions and oppositions are inherent to our reality. Rather than reducing contradictions to be viewed as mere conflicts, dialectics seeks to understand them as dynamic and interconnected aspects of a larger whole. It emphasises that unity can arise from the synthesis of opposing elements.

Change and Development: Dialectical thinking acknowledges that everything is in a

state of constant change and development. It views reality as a process rather than a static entity. Dialectics emphasises the idea that change occurs through the interaction and resolution of contradictions over time, leading to progress and growth.

Interconnectedness and Interdependence: Dialectics emphasises the interconnectedness and interdependence of phenomena. It recognises that no element exists in isolation, but rather as part of a larger system or context. Dialectical thinking encourages holistic and systemic perspectives that consider the relational nature of things and the influence of various factors on each other.

Process and Becoming: Dialectics focuses on the process of becoming rather than static states. It recognises that reality is not fixed but is constantly evolving and unfolding. Dialectical thinking emphasises the importance of understanding phenomena in their historical and developmental contexts, recognising the dynamic nature of change and growth.

Dialogue and Critical Thinking: Dialectical principles promote dialogue, critical thinking, and the exploration of different perspectives. Dialectics encourages open and respectful discussions that challenge assumptions, examine contradictions, and seek higher levels of understanding. It values the exploration of opposing viewpoints and the synthesis of diverse perspectives in the pursuit of truth.

Pedagogical Principles

> *"In all of the education research I've been involved with, transcendent outcomes are derived from an emotional engagement in learning, rather than by simply acquiring knowledge" (Busteed, 2019, as cited in Burke & Larmar, 2021, p.603)*

Emotional Engagement in Learning: We understand that true learning occurs through emotional engagement, going beyond the acquisition of knowledge. Our pedagogical practices are designed to foster deep emotional engagement in the learning process. We maintain small class sizes to ensure personal engagement. We hire lecturers who are counselling and psychotherapy professionals who are passionate about the field, can model the relational capacities being taught and are inclined to be personally invested in their students' success. We endeavour to assist students in finding the ways in which the material is personally significant and engage them in existential questions related to purpose and meaning. By creating a supportive and immersive environment in which students feel seen, we encourage students to welcome their vulnerabilities, tolerate discomfort and engage congruently. Students are supported in examining their

motivations and values. They are also provided with opportunities to observe and process their cognitive and emotional responses as they engage honestly with each other and enhancing their ability to empathise and genuinely connect with others.

Transformative Learning Practices: Our program draws upon transformative learning practices, which encourage students to critically reflect on their assumptions, challenge existing beliefs, and examine the social and cultural contexts that shape their perspectives. Through this process, students develop a broader awareness of themselves and others and develop the capacity to support clients in exploring and creating their own sense of purpose and meaning in life. Transformative learning practices promote personal growth, encourage life-long learning and support students in developing the agency to effect social change.

Relational Dialogical Pedagogy: We embrace a relational dialogical pedagogical framework, placing dialogue, collaboration, critical thinking, and respect for diverse perspectives at the core of our teaching and learning process. We create an inclusive and respectful learning environment where students engage in open and authentic dialogues, challenging each other's ideas and assumptions. This approach fosters critical thinking, cultural humility and responsiveness, and the ability to navigate complex therapeutic interactions.

Experiential and Immersive Learning: Our program draws on a tripartite pedagogy that incorporates theory, practice and personal work. We employ experiential and immersive learning practices to facilitate the development of relational depth and professional competence. Students engage in discussions, hands-on activities, roleplays, and simulated therapeutic encounters, providing them with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge and practice therapeutic skills in a safe and supportive environment. This experiential learning approach enhances students' self-awareness, empathy, and capacity for therapeutic presence.

Reflexive Professional Identity: We aim to cultivate a reflexive professional identity in our students. We encourage them to engage in self-reflection, exploring their values, biases, and assumptions about therapy and the clients they will serve. Through this introspective process, students develop a strong ethical foundation and a commitment to ongoing self-examination, ensuring they provide culturally sensitive and morally responsive counselling services.

In summary, our Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy program embraces a relational-dialectical humanistic approach that recognises the inherent worth and

potential for growth in individuals. The Philosophy of counselling and psychotherapy we teach emphasises the importance of creating a safe and empathic therapeutic environment, exploring and processing emotions, and facilitating the client's self-exploration and growth. It values the subjective experience of the individual, the therapeutic relationship, and the ongoing process of personal development. Through transformative learning practices and a relational dialogical pedagogical framework, we strive to develop competent and compassionate therapists who are capable of fostering healing, transformation, and social change. By combining immersive, experiential learning with reflective practices, we empower students to develop the necessary skills, self-awareness and agency to engage in meaningful therapeutic encounters and contribute to the well-being of their clients and to others within their social ecologies.

Guidance for Engagement in Experiential Learning Activities

Counselling and Psychotherapy Postgraduate Suite

Purpose

Experiential learning is a fundamental component of the Counselling and Psychotherapy Postgraduate Suite. The development of therapeutic competence requires more than theoretical knowledge; it requires opportunities for direct participation, reflection, interpersonal learning, and skills practice. As students progress through the course, they can expect engagement in experiential activities that support the development of therapeutic presence, self-awareness, relational capacity, ethical sensitivity, and professional identity.

Experiential learning within this program is grounded in person-centred, humanistic-experiential, and trauma-informed principles, including respect for agency, self-determination, collaboration, and choice. Students are invited to participate actively and authentically while remaining attentive to their own boundaries, readiness, and wellbeing.

For the purposes of this document, *group work* may refer to learning activities conducted in dyads (pairs), triads, small groups, or whole-class settings, either within scheduled classes or as part of learning activities undertaken outside class time.

Experiential Learning Within the Program

Experiential learning activities form an important component of learning and assessment within the Counselling and Psychotherapy Postgraduate Courses. Students can expect to encounter experiential learning throughout the program in a variety of formats and roles. This document provides guidance about the nature of these activities and the principles that support a safe, respectful, and effective learning environment.

Experiential activities may involve participation in a range of learning roles, including:

- Therapist
- Client
- Observer
- Peer reviewer

Depending on the unit, experiential activities may occur:

- In dyads, triads, or small groups
- In whole-class experiential activities
- In structured experiential groups conducted outside scheduled class time
- Via peer review and feedback processes

The nature, structure, and assessment requirements of experiential learning activities vary across units and are outlined in relevant unit materials. Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these requirements and discuss any questions or concerns with the relevant Unit Coordinator or Course Coordinator.

Choice, Agency, and Participation

Authentic engagement does not require extensive personal disclosure.

While experiential learning is an important component of the program, students retain responsibility for determining the nature, depth, and extent of their participation and self-disclosure. Students are not expected to disclose deeply personal, traumatic, or emotionally overwhelming experiences to be able to participate meaningfully.

Students are encouraged to remain attentive to their own wellbeing, readiness, capacity, and boundaries throughout experiential learning activities. Participation may at times involve engaging deeply with an activity, while at other times it may involve recognising and communicating personal limits, boundaries, or needs.

Experiential learning activities are designed primarily to support professional learning and development rather than to provide therapy. While participation may at times feel personally meaningful, insightful, or therapeutic, students are encouraged to select material that feels appropriate for an educational setting and that they feel sufficiently resourced to explore.

When participating in the role of client, students are encouraged to exercise thoughtful judgement regarding the nature and depth of material they choose to bring into focus. Ideally, students will select experiences or concerns that they feel able to engage with constructively, even if their student therapist is unable to respond in the way that an experienced practitioner might.

Multiple Relationships, Confidentiality, and Boundaries

Safety, trust, respect, and professional responsibility are foundational to experiential learning.

Because counselling and psychotherapy training is inherently interpersonal, students will occupy multiple relationships throughout the program. At a minimum, students will be classmates; many will also develop friendships, collegial relationships, or other social connections. Some students may have known one another before commencing the course.

Experiential learning introduces an additional dimension to these relationships. Students may encounter one another in the roles of therapist, client, observer, and peer reviewer, and may be entrusted with personal stories, emotions, and reflections shared within simulated therapeutic encounters. Students therefore gain access to information that may be deeply personal and that might ordinarily only be disclosed within a therapeutic relationship.

The privilege of being entrusted with this information brings with it a responsibility to uphold one another's dignity, privacy, and autonomy.

Confidentiality Within Experiential Activities

Information shared within experiential activities must remain within the group in which it was shared.

For example, following dyad or triad work, students may discuss their learning, observations, reflections, relational processes, and areas for growth during larger group discussions, but should not disclose the personal content shared by another student.

Students may always choose to disclose their own information. However, material shared by others should remain confidential unless the person who originally disclosed it has given permission or chosen to raise it themselves.

Respecting the Boundaries of Experiential Work

Experiential work should be understood as having clear interpersonal and educational boundaries. Outside the experiential activity and any facilitated reflection processes, students are expected to respect the privacy and containment of the work that occurred.

The Rogerian principle of allowing the client to direct and guide the content is particularly relevant in this context. Students who have participated as therapists, observers, or peer reviewers should not raise content disclosed by a student client outside of the experiential activity unless invited to do so.

If a student chooses to revisit previously explored material in another context, they are encouraged to communicate clearly how they would like others to engage with that content.

Together, students contribute to a learning environment characterised by trust, dignity, inclusion, mutual respect, and care for others.

Responsibilities of Educators and Facilitators

Educators and facilitators are also expected to uphold the privacy, dignity, and autonomy of students participating in experiential learning activities. Information shared by students during experiential work will generally be treated as confidential, contained within the learning context, and not discussed outside appropriate educational, supervisory, or administrative contexts.

Teaching staff may discuss learning processes, group dynamics, pedagogical issues, or student learning needs for educational or supervisory purposes but will not ordinarily disclose personal information shared by individual students.

Where concerns arise relating to student wellbeing, risk, fitness for practise, professional conduct, safety, legal obligations, or other serious matters, teaching staff may need to consult with the Course Coordinator or other appropriate Institute personnel. Wherever appropriate and practicable, students will be informed of such consultation.

Learning, Self-Awareness, and Wellbeing

Counselling and psychotherapy training differs from many other forms of higher education in that students themselves become an important site of learning. The development of therapeutic competence often involves engagement with personal experience, interpersonal processes, self-reflection, and feedback from others.

As a result, experiential learning activities may evoke:

- Emotional responses
- Personal insights
- Increased self-awareness
- Reflection on values, beliefs, assumptions, and biases
- Awareness of unresolved personal issues
- Greater understanding of relational patterns and interpersonal processes

These experiences are often a normal and valuable aspect of therapist development and professional formation.

Diversity, Difference, and Feedback

Experiential learning frequently involves engagement with peers whose identities, experiences, cultures, values, beliefs, and worldviews differ from one's own.

Students are encouraged to approach these encounters with openness, curiosity, humility, respect, and a willingness to learn. Experiential activities provide opportunities to deepen awareness of personal assumptions, values, preferences, biases, and ways of relating while developing the capacity to engage constructively and ethically with difference.

Experiential learning also involves giving, receiving, and reflecting upon feedback. Feedback is offered in service of learning, professional growth, and the development of therapeutic competence. It is not intended as a judgement of personal worth, character, or value.

Different units may provide different guidance, structures, and approaches to feedback. These differences are intentional and often reflect the philosophical assumptions, values, pedagogical principles, and clinical practices associated within particular therapeutic approaches.

For example, different counselling and psychotherapy traditions may place emphasis on different ways of attending to process, reflecting on experience, identifying strengths, offering observations, or supporting professional development. Learning how to engage with these differing approaches to feedback is therefore an important aspect of professional education and training.

Students are encouraged to engage with feedback respectfully and reflectively, recognising that professional learning sometimes—and not always—involves both affirmation and challenge. Similarly, students are encouraged to offer feedback to peers in ways that are respectful, constructive, and consistent with the learning objectives of the relevant unit.

Limits of Confidentiality

Students are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding information shared within experiential learning activities. However, there may be circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be maintained. These circumstances may include concerns relating to:

- Risk of serious harm to self or others

- Legal obligations requiring disclosure
- University policies regarding discrimination, harassment, bullying, or behaviour that may compromise safety, dignity, or inclusion of others
- The safety, wellbeing, or professional functioning of a student

If students are uncertain about whether information should remain confidential, or believe disclosure may be necessary for safety, ethical, professional, or legal reasons, they are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the relevant Unit Coordinator, facilitator, or Course Coordinator wherever possible.

Where disclosure is required, information will be shared only with those who have a legitimate need to know and only to the extent necessary to address the concern. Wherever appropriate and possible, students will be informed when confidentiality cannot be maintained.

Final Guidance

Students are encouraged to read this document carefully and to discuss any questions or concerns regarding experiential learning activities with their Unit Coordinator or Course Coordinator.

Information regarding participation, assessment requirements, professional conduct, student responsibilities, and unit-specific activities is outlined separately within relevant unit materials, institutional policies, and course documentation.

Student Acknowledgement and Consent

I acknowledge that:

- I have read and understood this Guidance for Engagement in Experiential Learning Activities document.
- I understand that experiential learning is a fundamental component of the Counselling and Psychotherapy Postgraduate Program.
- I understand that experiential learning activities may form part of learning and assessment requirements within units.
- I understand that I may be invited to participate in the roles of therapist, client, observer, and peer reviewer.
- I understand that experiential learning activities are educational rather than therapeutic in purpose.

- I retain responsibility for determining the nature, depth, and extent of my participation and self-disclosure.
- I understand my responsibilities in relation to confidentiality, boundaries, respectful conduct, and professional behaviour.
- I understand the limits of confidentiality outlined in this document.
- I agree to participate in experiential learning activities in accordance with the expectations described in this document.

Student Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____