

## **Addiction - is it a label or a choice?**

### **Summary**

The term 'addiction' first appeared in the twelfth century and subsequently labeled as a 'disease of the will' in the eighteenth century. What constitutes addiction has changed over time and even today there is no unanimous definition. There are multiple theories and techniques in use, so can existential therapy as a philosophical enterprise contribute to the treatment of addictions? As a modality that strives to avoid seeing clients in terms of treatment labels, it instead offers a way of helping clients understand the choices they have made - and are still making - as it intersects with their values and beliefs of themselves, others and the world.

This workshop will explore the use of the term addiction both as a social construct and as a personal meaning structure. There will be an experiential focus to the day and an opportunity to discuss and explore our work with clients.

### **Who will benefit?**

This course is designed for:

- Practising counsellors and psychotherapists who wish to extend their knowledge and understanding to include the existential tradition
- Trainee counsellors and psychotherapists who wish to include the knowledge and practice of the existential tradition in their learning
- Practitioners in the 'helping' profession who wish to incorporate existential issues into their practice

### **Learning outcomes**

- to develop an understanding of the contribution of existential philosophy to the practice of counselling and psychotherapy
- to integrate the philosophical concepts into the practice of counselling and psychotherapy
- to assimilate the philosophical concepts around choice and meaning as it relates to addictive behaviours into current counselling and psychotherapy practice
- to understand how the relationship between counsellor/therapist can benefit the client

### **Content areas**

- Philosophical understanding of addictive behaviours
- Definitions and labels
- Personal and social assumptions
- Choice and meaning
- Motivational interviewing from an existential perspective
- Phenomenological inquiry and working with clients
- Integrating the physical, social, private and spiritual worlds