

Depression or Meaninglessness - an existential perspective on working with Depression

Summary

The textbooks write about Existential Depression as occurring when one confronts issues of existence such as life, death, disease, freedom and responsibility. However, the existentialist would argue that these concerns are at the heart of being human, hence worthy of exploration regardless of diagnosis. An individual suffering from depression will question the meaning of life, often feeling a sense of despair, loneliness and meaninglessness. While some people may experience depression after some traumatic event, such as the death of a loved one, the loss of a job or relationship, others may suffer the feelings of depression quite spontaneously; that is, there is no apparent triggering event.

This workshop will explore how existential philosophy and practice might contribute to our understanding of working with people with depression. There will be an experiential focus to the day and an opportunity to discuss questions around diagnosis, medication, referral and so on.

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 meaning as it relates to depression and despair into current counselling and psychotherapy practice
- to understand how the relationship between counsellor/therapist can benefit the client

Content areas

- Philosophical understanding of depression and meaninglessness
- Clinical definitions of depression
- The Existential Givens
- Authenticity and Responsibility
- The relationship between depression and anxiety