

## An Existential Approach to Trauma

### Summary

An unresolved traumatic event can break the connections between individuals and their sense of belonging in the world. Alienated from themselves, life takes on an unreal quality. Despite that, trauma is a natural part of the human condition. It may involve profound suffering, but it is also an opportunity to discover compassion for others and for ourselves. The role of a counsellor in trauma is to help the trauma sufferer to find meaning from their experiences, to enable them to pick up the threads of their life once again, to re-establish relationships and reinvent their world views. This two-day workshop introduces participants to the concept of trauma viewed from an existential perspective. We will look at how existential philosophy and concepts influence our work with trauma clients.

### Who will benefit?

This course is designed for:

- Practicing counsellors and psychotherapists who wish to extend their knowledge and understanding of trauma to include the existential tradition
- Trainee counsellors and psychotherapists who wish to develop an understanding of the concepts and practice of trauma counselling from an existential perspective
- Practitioners in the 'helping' profession who wish to develop or extend their skills in treating trauma clients and/or to incorporate an existential approach to their practices

### Learning outcomes

- To develop an understanding of the contribution of existential philosophy to the practice of trauma counselling
- To integrate the philosophical concepts into the practice of trauma counselling
- To understand how the personal beliefs of the trauma sufferer interact with their self, others and the world, and its influence on the counselling relationship
- To understand how the client can make meaning from the traumatic experience

### Content area

- Introduction to trauma
- The nature of existential crisis
- Posttraumatic anxiety
- A phenomenological approach to meaning and its loss
- The importance of social context-culture and emotion
- Meaning, anxiety and ontology
- Authenticity in crisis
- An existential approach to therapy