



## **SCCH Health Psychology Consulting**

### **An Introduction to Therapeutic Skills For Health Psychologists**

**23<sup>rd</sup> April 2014: British Psychological Society, London Office**

**Attendees:** Suitable for trainee and qualified Health Psychologists, wishing to develop their applied clinical practice and therapeutic skills.

**Aim:** To gain a comprehensive understanding of the clinical processes and skills involved in delivering individual Health Psychology therapeutic practice.

#### **Objectives for attendees:**

- To be self-aware of personal factors that can impact upon therapy outcomes.
- To describe the basic structure of individual Health Psychology therapeutic sessions.
- To identify the range of communication skills required for effective practice with individual patients/clients and their purpose within the therapeutic process.
- To understand the key clinical skills required to develop and maintain the health psychologist-patient/client therapeutic alliance and its impact on clinical outcomes.
- To identify key changes in therapeutic working style that can be implemented within their current role.

#### **Course Outline:**

##### **1. Developing self-awareness in practice:**

- *Self-awareness within therapy:* Personal style, social skills, individual issues and behaviours.
- *Boundaries in practice:* Managing your emotions, knowing limitations of professional practice, being aware of changes in personal life that may impact on safe and effective practice: problems, stress, health, life events.

##### **2. Structuring Individual Therapeutic Sessions:**

- *Working as a Health Psychologist in individual therapeutic practice: What do you need to know?* Thinking about your therapeutic environment. Engagement with clients: introducing your role, practice and skills, professional expectations of undertaking therapeutic practice, the evidence base for components of effective therapeutic practice.
- *Differentiating therapeutic practice from research practice:* How are they different? Accountability, roles, intervention delivery, outcomes measurement
- *Therapeutic processes:* Session content/structure/ frequency, ways of working.

##### **3. Key skills within Health Psychology (HP) therapeutic practice:**

- *How can Health Psychology Theories and Models integrate into therapeutic practice?* Building HP models into A&F and the structure of therapeutic sessions. Turning health psychology theory and concepts into everyday therapeutic practice, sessions and questions.
- *Communication skills:* active listening, empathy, rapport, collaboration, summarising

- *Clinical skills:* Guiding therapeutic change and enabling personal discovery for patients/ clients through using open questioning techniques.
- *Assessment and formulation (A&F) skills:* Gaining information through communication and clinical techniques. Using socratic questions and the 'downward arrow' technique. Using the A&F to set goals, determine therapeutic content and outcomes.

#### **4. Developing & maintaining the psychologist-client therapeutic alliance (TA):**

- *What is the therapeutic relationship/alliance between psychologist & patient/client?* What is the evidence base for its value, function & involvement in therapeutic change, intervention effectiveness and outcomes?
- *Professional and client roles within the therapeutic alliance:* The value of collaboration, hope and genuineness, forming a positive, non-judgemental "modelling" relationship – client as expert in problem, therapist as expert in therapy
- Being aware of transference and counter-transference in the TA
- *Giving feedback in sessions & ending therapy:* Processes, skills & management
- *Challenges for the TA within Health Psychology Practice:* Patient/Client-psychologist relationships that are affected by unpredictable health and medical outcomes, compulsory referral situations, limited capacity and physical function to implement therapy, difficult scenarios (e.g. poor prognosis, raising socially undesirable behaviours)

#### **5. Developing clinical judgement skills in practice:**

- *Challenges in therapeutic practice as a Health Psychologist:* What are we qualified to do?
- Confidence to deliver therapy as a Health Psychologist with supervision for support

#### **6. Action planning your next steps**

- Goals to achieve following course
- First actions and challenges to implementation
- Review and development process for skill building

#### **7. Course Evaluation and Feedback**

- Structured feedback on course aims, objectives & delivery

***\* Course comprises taught material, practical case studies and active discussion. Certificate of attendance is provided with course hand outs.***