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Donohue, Chloé, Streatfeild, Katrina, Consoli, Andres, Murphy, Kevin, Young, Charles, Charura, Divine, Kotze, Sophia, Ade-Serrano, Yetunde, Webber, Mike, Srivastava, Ashutosh, Di Mattia, Michael, Hwang, Bongjoo, Whitcombe, Sue, Van Wanrooij, Tim, Gilmour, Amanda and Puno, Lissy (2024) Counselling psychology: a position paper. Discussion Paper. Global Counselling Psychology Forum.

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Counselling Psychology

A POSITION PAPER

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JULY 2024

Global Counselling Psychology Forum

The Global Counselling Psychology Forum is a dynamic international forum dedicated to promoting the visibility and situating the value of Counselling Psychology worldwide. It is currently comprised of Counselling Psychologists from seven different nations. Our forum fosters a collaborative platform for sharing knowledge, best practices, and relevant issues in Counselling Psychology today. We are committed to promoting mental health and well-being across diverse contexts, advocating for the highest standards in training and professional practice, and supporting the advancement of Counselling Psychology around the globe. Through our initiatives, we aim to create a global voice for the profession, addressing challenges and amplifying the impact of the profession in communities around the world.

Our mission as a Global Counselling Psychology Forum is to foster a unifying voice that resonates globally, ensuring we stand together in our shared commitment to mental health, wellbeing, and the unique value that Counselling Psychology adds to Applied Psychology. As chairs and presidents within our respective localities, we provide support to one another, creating a network of solidarity and collaboration. By engaging in joint research and sharing best practices, we aim to expand our field collectively. Through organising global Counselling Psychology seminars, we strive to facilitate meaningful dialogue and knowledge exchange among Counselling Psychologists around the world. Furthermore, we are committed to contributing to a global social justice agenda, advocating for equity and inclusivity in mental health care worldwide.

Executive Summary

This Position Paper aims to provide a global perspective on Counselling Psychology for the purpose of education and creating a unifying voice. The Position Paper begins with a brief introduction - stating its unique purpose and value. It presents the history of Counselling Psychology, investigating its roots and the emergence of the tension between empirical science and humanistic practices; the contextual history of Counselling Psychology in various nations is also presented. Next, the philosophy of Counselling Psychology is discussed, highlighting its core pillars. The professional competencies are outlined, emphasising the many roles, areas of expertise, and work environments that Counselling Psychologists work in. The latter part of the document showcases the unique value of Counselling Psychologists and the embodiment of its core values particularly in centring the human experiences in context.



Thus, while the profession has developed alongside other applied fields of psychology, counselling psychology is distinctive from a treatment point of view because of its attention to both normal developmental issues and problems associated with physical, emotional, and mental disorder.



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1. Introduction

This is a comprehensive and evidence-based document addressing the multifaceted aspects of the field of Counselling Psychology. It highlights its historical development, philosophical foundations, required competencies, and the unique value Counselling Psychologists bring to Mental Health care.

The Position Paper is designed to inform, educate, and promote a deeper understanding of Counselling Psychology, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries to emphasise its universal significance.

The Position Paper is a resource for professionals within the field, policymakers, regulatory bodies, educators, and the general public. It promotes a broader understanding of Counselling Psychology's significance, encourages the adoption of best practices, and fosters dialogue about the profession's impact on the global stage.

Ultimately, this paper elevates the quality of mental health care worldwide in advancing the well-being of individuals and communities through a deeper knowledge of Counselling Psychology's role and responsibilities.

2. The History of Counselling Psychology

To gain a succinct understanding of Counselling Psychology, it is crucial to grasp the context and history that led to its emergence. Delving deeper into the historical, social, political, and economic influences on psychology enables a stronger understanding of the distinction of Counselling Psychology in the broader context of applied psychologies.

2.1 The Roots of Psychology

Psychology, like many other disciplines such as biology, mathematics, and physics, originated from the discipline of philosophy (Leahey, 2004; Russell, 1961). In the 17th century, psychology began to separate from philosophy with the rise of science. During this time, significant developments occurred in physics and mathematics. This gave rise to the notion that people could control knowledge about the universe. In particular, and significantly to psychology, the identification of physical laws in the universe led to the idea that parts of the mind might also be governed by similar laws (Orlans, 2009). This, in conjunction with the gradual shift from mysticism to empirical science in the 18th and 19th century due to industrialism, had a significant impact on psychology. This shift focused on observable and measurable behaviours instead of philosophical or reflective issues, which is relevant to the development of Counselling Psychology and some of the tensions it faces today.

However, with the rise of Humanism emerged from the notion of what it means to be human and the construction of meaning. Philosophers began to postulate that human beings are all trying to make sense of their existence and that in order to do so, they interact with others, thus needing to make sense of someone else making sense (Heidegger, 1889-1976). These

ideas had a profound influence on Counselling Psychology, which is particularly concerned with the ability to work with and understand the co-creation of meaning within a therapeutic relationship. There was further challenge to the concept of a universal truth through Freud's emphasis on human behaviour and motivation being related to the unconscious mind. Roger's early research played a vital role in the rise of humanism. His research explored the varieties of non-directive vs directive therapy and described the process of therapy. Therapist reflections on client content led to more self-expression, connections, and changes in perceptions between feelings, thoughts, and factors, ultimately leading to attempted actions to make changes behaviourally or systemically. Through this, the core conditions were developed as a new way of being, namely, unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruence. The use of the core conditions is how the therapeutic relationship was formed. This radical humanistic practice of acceptance and learning about a person through empathy pushed the field into a social justice empowerment position (Lago & Charura, 2016). Rogers moved from therapy to education, encounter groups, cross-cultural communication, political change, and peace work.

2.2 The Emergence of Counselling Psychology

The origin of Counselling Psychology can be found in the historical tension between empirical science and the construction of meaning (Larsson et al., 2012). Counselling Psychology has needed to reclaim philosophy as a valued concept, together with psychology. Therefore, Counselling Psychology is committed to both empirical evidence and the construction of meaning. Through reclaiming the importance of the construction of meaning, there is an embedded stance of questioning within the profession. This questioning within Counselling Psychology means that knowledge needs to be contextualized and held tentatively, with an understanding of the post-modernist stance that there are multiple

perspectives or truths. Thus, Counselling Psychology is distinctive from a treatment point of view, because it attends to both normal developmental difficulties and problems associated with physical, emotional, and mental disorders (Connolly et al., 2014).

2.3 Counselling Psychology Across the Globe

While the philosophical origin of Counselling Psychology can be traced back to tensions within empirical knowledge and philosophy, the establishment of Counselling Psychology within countries differs across the globe. For many countries, it was in the 1970s and 1980s that a division of Counselling Psychology was established. Many of the Counselling Psychology divisions were formally established in response to a gap left by Clinical Psychology (Bantjes et al., 2015; DiMattia & Grant, 2016). Below is some brief information pertaining to the formal establishment of Counselling Psychology divisions in some countries.

2.3.1 Australia

The first discussions of Counselling Psychology in Australia took place at the Australian Psychology Society in 1970 (DiMattia & Grant, 2016). Following these discussions, the Rose Committee report was created, which defined the training and role of Counselling Psychologists in Australia. In particular, it focused on reaching all parts of the population, including people living in the community experiencing adverse events, as well as people in clinical settings. According to Grant and colleagues (2008), this stemmed from Counselling Psychology providing additional services compared to Clinical Psychology. The first Counselling Psychology training commenced in 1975, and in 1976, the Australian Psychological Society formally established the Division of Counselling Psychology. In 1983,

the Division of Counselling Psychology became the Board of Counselling Psychology, and in 1993, the current title of College of Counselling Psychology was adopted.

2.3.2 India

In 1995, St. Xavier's College, Bombay, started the first counselling center for its students. Further to this, the Bharatiya Counselling Psychology Association was constituted in 2017 with the aim of serving people by promoting and providing quality counselling. This was achieved by facilitating joint representation of all stakeholders working as counsellors across India. This includes work in the following areas: research, advocacy, evidence-building, awareness-building, counselling, and teaching. However, most recently, the National Commission for Allied Health Care Professionals was constituted in 2021, which will provide registration for Counselling Psychologists.

2.3.3 Ireland

The beginning of Counselling Psychology in Ireland goes back to the formation of the Counselling and Therapy Interest Group within the Psychology Society of Ireland in 1987 (Connolly et al., 2014). By 1989, this interest group started to support and facilitate professional workshops, networking, and supervision in counselling and psychotherapy for interested psychologists. At a similar time, a one-year diploma in Counselling Psychology was developed, which later evolved into a two-year Masters degree in 1991. In 1997, the group achieved Divisional status with the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) and to this day is one of the largest divisions within the PSI. In 2012, the two-year Masters program in Counselling Psychology evolved into a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology and is currently the only Counselling Psychology training in Ireland.

2.3.4 New Zealand / Aotearoa

Counselling Psychology in New Zealand/Aotearoa can be traced back to the helping practices of the Māori (Farrell, 2013). However, the formal beginning of Counselling Psychology goes back to the establishment of the New Zealand Psychological Society's Institute of Counselling Psychology in 2003 (Du Preez et al., 2016). The New Zealand Psychologists Board approved a Counselling Psychology Scope of Practice in 2010, and the Auckland University of Technology received accreditation for training Counselling Psychologists in 2011. In 2014, the Psychologists Board approved specific competencies for the scope of Counselling Psychologists under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act, thereby regulating Counselling Psychologists as health professionals.

2.3.5 Singapore

Little has been recorded about the development of Counselling Psychology in Singapore. Yeo and colleagues (2015) postulate that counselling in Singapore began in 1964 when a group of doctors, pastors, and missionaries established the Churches Counselling Service to support people with emotional distress. In 1975, this establishment was renamed to the Counsel and Care Center and became secular. In 2018, the Special Group at the Singapore Psychological Society was established.

2.3.6 South Africa

The history of Counselling Psychology within South Africa is rooted in the country's colonial past and the socio-political consequences of apartheid. Some trace the roots of Counselling Psychology in South Africa to Stellenbosch University, considered to be the intellectual epicenter for Afrikaner nationalism (Leach et al., 2003). Cooper and colleagues (1990) assert that Counselling Psychology was primarily concerned with meeting the goals of the

nationalist government by attending to the psychological well-being of the minority White Afrikaans-speaking citizens. While Bantjes and colleagues (2015) assert this is no longer the emphasis, it has been a legacy that Counselling Psychology has been working with since inception. In 1974, the professional category of Counselling Psychology was recognised, and over time, training programs have been offered at both historically White and historically Black universities.

2.3.7 United Kingdom

In 1979, discussions began when the Professional Affairs Board of the British Psychological Society started a working party to consider the relationship between counselling and psychology (Orlans, 2009). From this work, the Counselling Psychology Section at the British Psychological Society was established in 1982. In 1989, the Section evolved into a Special Group in which its own practice and guidelines provided a point of reference for both a scientific interest group and a professional body (Woolfe et al, 2010). This Special Group secured the establishment of a diploma in counselling, which was a recognised route to obtaining Chartered Status. In 1994, Counselling Psychology was given the status of a full Division within the British Psychological Society and has established itself alongside other applied psychology divisions in the UK (Nielson & Nicholas, 2016). As of 2024, it is the second largest Division within the British Psychological Society with members required to achieve doctoral level training to attain Chartership and become registered with its regulatory body.

2.3.8 United States of America

Per Lichtenberg and collaborators (Lichtenberg et al., 2016), Counselling Psychology in the US was born out of personnel guidance psychology, in contrast to Clinical Psychology,

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which was born out in response to abnormal psychology. With respect to the organisational aspects and within the American Psychological Association (APA), it was initially known as the Division of Counselling and Guidance and later became the Division of Counselling Psychology. In part, it sought to address the needs of veterans returning from WWII, specifically their mental health, educational, and vocational concerns in the context of the Veteran Administration services. Of note, while Division 12 (Clinical Psychology) held a conference in Boulder, Colorado in 1949 to develop training standards for Clinical Psychology, Division 17 (Counselling and Guidance, eventually Counselling Psychology and now Society of Counselling Psychology) held a Conference on the Training of Counselling Psychologists at Northwestern University in 1952, where some of the current standards were set (e.g., doctoral level degree, research training, scientist-practitioner model, identity as a Counselling Psychologist). Subsequent training standards conferences and the advent of APA's Commission on the Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology (CRSPPP) further defined the profession as a distinct specialty. It is important to underscore the existence of the American Counselling Association in the US, which emphasises counselling and the training of primarily Master-level practitioners in accredited programs (CACREP), and, to a lesser extent, doctoral programs in Counsellor Education and Supervision. Nonetheless, the term professional psychologists in most of the US is reserved for those that have earned a doctoral degree and become licensed as such (the same license is held by Clinical and Counselling Psychologists – note that licenses in the US are state-specific and not national).

3. The Philosophy of Counselling Psychology

The philosophy of Counselling Psychology has its roots in the historical context in which it emerged. At its core, it revolves around the tension between empirical evidence and an individual's construction, as well as viewing the client through the lens of their context and culture (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). Counselling Psychology is traditionally grounded in a biopsychosocialspiritual, phenomenological, and humanistic perspective, and it is not reductionist in favouring a medical or biological model of human behaviour and illness. It also does not approach clients with an assumption of pathology (Rizq, 2008) and sometimes works with a positive psychology (psychofortology) framework. This section explores the core tenets of Counselling Psychology's philosophy.

3.1 The Scientist-Practitioner Model

The scientist-practitioner model is central to Counselling Psychology's philosophy. It outlines the bidirectional relationship between psychological theory, client work, and research methodology. It emphasises the importance of practitioner psychologists allowing empirical research to influence their applied practice with clients, and reciprocally, to allow their work with clients to inform and refine their research questions (Corrie & Callanan, 2000). This means that Counselling Psychologists are committed to staying updated with developments in the field of psychology and integrating these findings into their applied practice. They are also actively involved in producing evidence-based research stemming from their applied practice with clients (Blair, 2010). Therefore, Counselling Psychologists incorporate scientific thinking into all areas of their work, including applied practice, training, and research.

However, in keeping with the value of individual construction and meaning-making, Counselling Psychologists identify with a scientist-practitioner model that is led by applied practice. They are equally interested in empirical research and uncovering subjective truths (Orlans, 2009). At times, this is considered to be a practitioner-researcher identity.

Furthermore, Counselling Psychologists broaden the scope of the scientist-practitioner definition even more by asserting that the therapeutic relationship is an important part of being practitioner-led (Bury & Strauss, 2006), thus valuing subjective, innovative, and phenomenological methods for understanding human experience.

3.2 Social Justice

Social justice is a defining and crucial feature of Counselling Psychology that has been central to the profession since its inception (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Toporek & Williams, 2006). Historically and currently, Counselling Psychologists have been leaders in advocating for social justice within psychology. In 1967, at the American Psychological Association (APA) Convention, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. noted that social scientists had a limited role in revealing the truth about the brutality of segregation in the Southern United States (DeBlaere et al., 2019). Unfortunately, psychologists as a group at the APA took no action following this. This led to the independent development of Ethnic Acknowledging Psychological Associations (EAPAs, Consoli & Myers, 2022), starting with the Association of Black Psychologists (1968), followed by the National Latinx Psychological Association (1969), the Society of Indian Psychologists (1971), the Asian American Psychological Association (1972), and, most recently, the American Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African Psychological Association (2017), by Counselling Psychologists (Delgado-Romero et al., 2012). Counselling Psychologists have also been central to the development of

divisions addressing other areas of oppressed and marginalised groups, such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and culture.

In applied practice, valuing social justice means understanding the individual within their context, culture, and larger systems. Counselling Psychologists consider how systems of oppression, from an intersectional perspective, may impact the multiple positionalities that individuals and groups can have (Moradi, 2017). This perspective is maintained throughout the formulation and therapeutic work with a client. Counselling Psychologists also engage in community psychology as a means to participate in actions that counter suffering, oppression, and inequality whilst promoting optimal community change (Graham, 2021).

3.3 Being Reflective Practitioners

At the heart of Counselling Psychology's philosophy is the concept of the reflective practitioner (Woolfe et al., 2010). This requires Counselling Psychologists to regularly consider and analyse their practice, the impact of the interaction within the therapeutic relationship on themselves, and how this may be experienced by those they are working with. Counselling Psychologists act as external observers to their own process, including thoughts, feelings, assumptions, and biases underlying their behaviour and practice (Hanley & Amos, 2017). This enhances self-awareness and understanding of their own subjectivity and how it may alter the ways in which they perceive their clients, their presenting difficulties, and the therapeutic relationship. For Counselling Psychologists, this process often begins with engagement in personal therapy and clinical supervision. Without increased self-awareness and understanding, practitioner psychologists can become overly influenced by their own experiences and understandings, which can lead their practice astray.

Being a reflective practitioner also means having a commitment to ongoing learning and reflection on practice to inform future practice. Schön (1983) initially coined the term "reflective practice" and identified two types of reflection. "Reflection-in-action" describes the reflection of the practitioner on their own behaviour as it occurs during a therapy session, while "reflection-on-action" occurs after therapy sessions or situations when the Counselling Psychologist reflects and analyses the event for insights into future practice. Both forms of reflective practices are key components of competent and ethical practice (Furr & Carroll, 2003). This is essential when working in a field of human relationships, a dynamic and evolving knowledge base, and challenges that are not suited to formulaic solutions. In other words, where there is a complex relationship between theory and practice (Douglas et al., 2016).

4. Competencies

Counselling Psychology is a dynamic field with varying levels of competencies worldwide. Different regions and countries have varying levels of training and accreditation for professionals in this field. While the requirements and standards may differ, there is often a common baseline representing the core level of training for Counselling Psychologists. This baseline ensures that practitioners have a solid foundation in their profession and can provide a certain level of competence and ethical care to their clients. This section explores the common foundational competencies globally for Counselling Psychologists.

Counselling Psychologists around the globe are expected to work safely and effectively within their scope of practice, including within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession in their respective countries (APA, 2012). They are required to maintain their fitness to practice by taking care of their holistic health (mental and physical) and exercise their own professional judgment autonomously (HCPC, 2015). As reflective practitioners, they critically reflect on the use of self in therapy, the personal lens through which they view the world, and are aware of their own biases. Therefore, Counselling Psychologists are conscious of the impact of culture, inequality, and diversity on practice and work in a non-discriminatory manner. This necessitates regular reflection and review of their practice.

Counselling Psychologists understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession. They possess a wealth of knowledge about health, well-being, disease, and disorder, as well as the structure and function of the human body. They are aware of the principles and applications of scientific inquiry, such as evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and the research process. Counselling Psychologists comprehend their role across a variety of settings and services, often taking leadership positions. As part of their

leadership roles, they understand the application of consultation models to service delivery and practice.

Due to their broad and deep knowledge, Counselling Psychologists work across a variety of domains. Some examples include forensic settings and prison services, schools, universities, health psychology services, corporate settings, child and adolescent mental health services, adult health, and adoption services. Counselling Psychologists often have experience working in both the private and public sectors.

4.1 Therapy and Intervention

Counselling Psychologists understand the philosophy, theory, and practice of more than one evidence-based model of formal psychological therapy. The most common therapy models include cognitive behavioural therapy, psychodynamic therapy, systemic therapies, and humanistic psychological therapies. Some Counselling Psychologists may have developed competencies in other models through training and continued professional development, such as mindful-based cognitive behavioural therapy, gestalt therapy, dialectical behavioural therapy, existential therapy, pluralistic therapy, integrative therapies, such as Schema-focused therapy, and more. A global portrait of Counselling Psychology (Goodyear et al., 2016) found that most Counselling Psychologists across the globe identify as integrative, meaning they combine several evidence-based approaches based on the client's needs, using their professional judgment. Therefore, Counselling Psychologists understand the therapeutic relationship across various therapy models and grasp theories of human cognitive, emotional, behavioural, social, and physiological functioning.

Counselling Psychologists are proficient in practicing more than one evidence-based psychological therapy model for a variety of client presentations (BPS, 2017). Clients may present with issues ranging from acute to chronic, mild to severe mental and behaviour disorders, personality disorders, and difficulties that have biological or neuropsychological aspects. Counselling Psychologists provide high-intensity psychotherapeutic interventions (typically lasting in excess of 12 consultations) and work with chronic mental and physical health conditions and psychosocial factors, such as coping, adaptation, and resilience to adverse circumstances and life events across the lifespan (APS, 2015). By drawing on developmental, social, and neuropsychological processes across the lifespan, Counselling Psychologists can facilitate psychological change in individuals, couples, groups, families, organisations, children and adolescents, and communities. Counselling Psychologists also understand theories of psychopathology and change, as well as the impact of psychopharmacology and other professional psychological interventions with their clients (NZBP, 2018).

4.2 Assessment and Formulation

Notwithstanding Counselling Psychologists' view of people as biopsychosociospiritual beings, they are also trained in and have knowledge of diagnostic frameworks, such as the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Diseases (ICD) system and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). However, they recognise that some clients may find it beneficial to receive a diagnosis, while others may find a label harmful, especially if it feels pathologising to the individual. Counselling Psychologists are able to administer and integrate psychometric test results, interviews, records and other sources of data to generate coherent case conceptualisations and diagnoses. Counselling

Psychologists are proficient in drawing on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform assessment and formulation across the lifespan.

An essential skill in assessment and formulation is initiating, developing, maintaining, and ending a purposeful therapeutic alliance. By working therapeutically at relational depth, Counselling Psychologists construct collaborative formulations using theoretical frameworks and the client's subjective experience (BPS, 2017). This approach enables Counselling Psychologists to develop an empathic understanding of the client's difficulties. These formulations are regularly revised and reflected upon as part of ongoing feedback and serve as the basis for decision-making regarding appropriate therapeutic and treatment plans. Counselling Psychologists also conduct psychological assessments, aiming to increase a shared understanding of self-awareness, the nature of distress, needs, expectations, and desired outcomes of the client. This may involve conducting appropriate assessments or monitoring procedures of treatment and interventions, such as routine outcome measures, effectively and safely. In addition, Counselling Psychologists conduct appropriate risk assessments and use them to guide practice. Utilising their assessment and formulation competencies, Counselling Psychologists can lead the implementation of ongoing formulation in work settings to enhance multi-professional communication, teamwork, and psychological mindedness.

4.3 Psychometric Testing

Counselling Psychologist where appropriate may evaluate, use, and interpret psychometric tests, employing their knowledge and critical understanding of psychometric theory (HPCSA, 2019). This involves selecting, administering, scoring, and interpreting psychometric tests for clients, including psychopathology, personality, neuropsychological function tests, emotional

and behavioural functioning, cognitive aptitude and developmental assessments, standardised procedures, and self-reports. These psychometric tests may be used by Counselling Psychologists as part of the diagnostic process, to inform psychological interventions or to advise on career or educational choices. Additionally, Counselling Psychologists have the ability to critically evaluate the reliability and validity of such procedures.

4.5 Community Psychology

Counselling Psychologists play an active role in the multi-disciplinary pursuit of community psychology that explores how individuals' relationship to society and aims to create positive social change. It aims to develop psychological knowledge that is relevant to community life and improves wellness bringing about psychosocial and structural change (Graham, 2021). In this framework Counselling Psychologists address mental health, substance abuse and violence at a community level. They engage in participatory action research involving community members in problem-solving and decision-making processes.

4.6 Supervision

Counselling Psychologists engage in regular supervision, in spite of their level of experience, both as a supervisor and supervisee. They can supervise a variety of professionals within the psychological field, including assistant psychologists, trainee psychologists, psychological well-being practitioners, cognitive-behavioural therapists, counsellors, psychotherapists, Forensic Psychologists, Health Psychologists, Educational Psychologists, Clinical psychologists, and other Counselling Psychologists. This includes both clinical and management supervision. Depending on the therapeutic modalities they have trained in, some Counselling Psychologists may prefer supervising practitioners within certain frameworks over others. The supervising Counselling Psychologist ensures they are sufficiently

experienced, appropriately trained, and competent to provide supervision. It is the responsibility of the supervising Counselling Psychologist to clearly define and negotiate with the supervisee on how the supervision process will be monitored, maintained, and extend the effectiveness and proficiency of the supervisee. Counselling Psychologists with significant experience may engage in co-supervision with other equally experienced applied psychologists.

4.7 Research

Counselling Psychologists can also be found working in research positions at universities and across various services. They are trained and experienced in the research process and have knowledge in a variety of methodologies and data analysis, including qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodologies. For these reasons, Counselling Psychologists often lead research projects and can conduct research rooted in both a positivist paradigm, such as quantitative methods and randomized controlled trials, and a constructivist paradigm, such as qualitative interviews exploring the individual's experience. The research is designed and carried out consistently with the values of Counselling Psychology, combining rigorous empirical inquiry with a firm value base grounded in the importance of the therapeutic relationship. Counselling Psychologists have contributed significant empirical knowledge to the field across various domains, including the development of difficulties and disorders, trauma, working at relational depth, cross-cultural processes, issues pertaining to social justice and underrepresented groups, and more.

4.8 Service and Policy Development

Counselling Psychologists play a crucial role in contributing to service and policy development in various ways. They conduct research and analyse data to provide evidence-

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based insights into mental health issues and the effectiveness of different interventions. Their expertise in research methodology and statistical analysis can help inform the development of evidence-based policies and services. Counselling Psychologists are skilled in conducting needs assessments and program evaluations to identify gaps in services and evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs. They can assess the specific mental health needs of different populations and communities, providing valuable information for policymakers to develop targeted and culturally appropriate services. Through program evaluation, Counselling Psychologists can identify areas for improvement and make recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of mental health programs. They can collaborate with policymakers and other stakeholders to provide expert advice and consultation on mental health policies and service development, offering insights in areas such as mental health promotion, prevention, early intervention, and treatment. By working together, they can ensure that policies and services are evidence-based, responsive to community needs, and aligned with best practices in the field.

5. The Value of Counselling Psychologists

Counselling Psychologists have a comprehensive understanding of psychological theories, health, well-being, and the human body. Counselling Psychologists are skilled in multiple evidence-based therapy models and often adopt an integrative approach based on client needs. They work with a wide range of clients and address various mental, physical, and psychosocial issues across different settings. By engaging in reflective practice, Counselling Psychologists are aware of their biases and understand the impact of culture, equality, and diversity on their work. Assessment and formulation are integral to their practice, involving therapeutic alliance, collaborative formulations, and psychological assessments. They conduct psychometric testing and understand the benefits and limitations of these diagnostic frameworks. Counselling Psychologists also provide supervision to various professionals within the field. Research skills enable Counselling Psychologists to contribute to empirical knowledge and employ both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. They play a vital role in service and policy development by conducting research, providing evidence-based insights, assessing needs, evaluating programs, and offering expert advice to inform mental health policies and services.

This unique set of skills and perspectives of Counselling Psychologists adds value to the mix of professionals who provide care to others. Their training and expertise enable them to understand the complexities of human emotions, thoughts, and behaviours. Their focus on a holistic person-centered approach to care complements the broader healthcare system, which often concentrates on physical health. They consider individuals in their entirety, taking into account their unique backgrounds, experiences, and contexts. Counselling Psychologists are

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able to utilise their extensive training in a wide range of therapeutic modalities and evidence-based interventions, which equips them with a diverse toolbox of techniques to address different mental health issues and tailor interventions to meet the unique needs of each individual. Through integrating scientific knowledge with clinical expertise, Counselling Psychologists ensure their interventions are informed by the latest research findings and continuously refining their practices. The integration of research and practice, with knowledge across several therapeutic modalities, helps ensure that individuals receive the most up-to-date and evidence-based care.

In summary, Counselling Psychologists bring a unique value to the mix of professionals who provide care to others. Their focus on mental health, holistic approach, expertise across several models of therapy, and integration of research and practice make them invaluable contributors to the field of mental health care. Their specialised knowledge, skills and expertise enable them to address individuals' psychological well-being in a comprehensive and person-centered manner, complementing the broader healthcare system and enhancing the overall quality of care.

6. Sustainability of the Profession

Counselling Psychology is an evolving field that plays a crucial role in promoting mental health and well-being across the world. When considering the sustainability of the profession, several key factors are likely to shape the direction of Counselling Psychology, including funding, standards, a global working framework, and expanding its reach to new countries.

Funding is a critical element in the future of Counselling Psychology. Across the globe, health boards, governmental and non-governmental bodies, must recognise the value of and invest in Counselling Psychology. Mental health issues are pervasive, affecting individuals, families, and communities. Addressing these issues will yield significant social and economic benefits. Governments should commit to allocating adequate resources to ensure that Counselling Psychology services are accessible to all who need them. This investment can help reduce the burden on healthcare systems by preventing mental health issues from escalating into more severe conditions.

The establishment of global standards and accreditation for Counselling Psychology is essential. A common set of standards ensures that Counselling Psychologists worldwide adhere to a consistent level of competency and ethical practice. It can also facilitate the exchange of professionals across borders and provide opportunities for obtaining bursaries and funding for research and development. A global accreditation system would enhance the credibility of Counselling Psychology as a profession and promote trust among clients seeking services in different countries.

While global standards and accreditation are vital, it's equally important to acknowledge the cultural and contextual differences that exist in different parts of the world. A global working

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framework should have a core set of principles and guidelines that form the foundation of Counselling Psychology practice. However, each locality should have the flexibility to adapt and tailor these principles to align with their unique cultural and societal norms. This approach ensures that Counselling Psychologists can effectively address the diverse needs of their clients while adhering to a common ethical and professional framework.

A global standard of training is integral to the future of Counselling Psychology. This standard could be competency-based, outlining the core competencies that Counselling Psychologists should possess. It would serve as a reference point for educational institutions, helping them develop curricula that meet the requirements of the profession. Moreover, a global standard of training can aid in the mobility of Counselling Psychologists, enabling them to practice in different countries with confidence in their qualifications and skills.

Expanding the reach of Counselling Psychology to new countries is an essential step in addressing the global mental health crisis. This process involves not only establishing Counselling Psychology programs and services but also fostering cross-cultural understanding and sensitivity among practitioners. International collaborations and partnerships can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise, making it possible for Counselling Psychology to thrive in diverse cultural contexts.

In conclusion, the sustainability of Counselling Psychology lies in its ability to become a global force for mental health and well-being. To achieve this vision, commitment to funding from health boards and government is crucial. Global standards, accreditation, and training can provide a solid foundation for the profession, while a flexible working framework allows for cultural adaptation. Expanding Counselling Psychology to new countries signifies an

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inclusive and comprehensive approach to addressing mental health issues on a global scale.

As we move forward, it is imperative that Counselling Psychology continues to evolve and adapt to meet the evolving needs of individuals and societies worldwide.

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