

## Integration – Meta Framework Overview

Matrix College teaches an Integrative approach to counselling. There are some basic beliefs that form the foundation of the integrative approach:

- That no-one approach has the whole truth
- The belief that every approach has something to offer
- The value of the relationship
- The importance of having a holistic view and to be inclusive

Matrix College requires all students to be guided by this meta-framework when developing their unique personal framework of integration when working as counsellors and to consider:

- Integration of self in relationship with self
- Integration of self in relationship with others/the world
- Integration of self in relationship to theory
- Integration of self in relationship to skills / practice
- Integration of self in relationship to current experience

### **1. Intrapyschic integration; integration of self in relation to the internal world**

Understanding and working with all parts of self-experience to foster greater integration and cohesiveness of self-narrative:

- Affective
- Behavioural
- Physiological
- Cognitive
- Spiritual

Understanding and exploring past experiences; childhood, relational needs, traumatic events.

Being open and curious to present here and now experiences; phenomenologically inquiring towards here and now experiences; self-reflective, self-regulating in the face of distressing experiences and being willing to hold a position of uncertainty in response to existential/ontological demands of life.

Imagining a future self in anticipation of challenges and opportunities arising from life; able to dream, play, prepare, consolidate, reflect and to be adaptive, creative, energised and stable.

### **2. Interpersonal integration; integration of self in relationship with others**

Being mindful and phenomenologically aware of self-in relationship experiences; somatic, sensory, affective, and cognitive processes. Being able to reflect on self in relationship with other experiences across the following domains:

- Affective
- Behavioural
- Physiological
- Cognitive
- Spiritual

Being curious and inquiring about patterned responses in relationship, openness to exploring transference phenomena, willing to adapt and try new ways of being in relationship to optimise relatedness.

Being empathic and inquiring; imaginatively entering the experience of others and explicitly inquiring about the experience of the other to promote attunement, synchrony and dyadic regulation and meaning-making; intersubjectivity.

**3. Cultural integration; integration with diversity and promoting anti-oppressive practice**

Being aware of micro- and macro-cultural heritage; being open to understanding and resolving all forms of explicit or implicit biases to promote equality and respect for the human experience. Being committed to understanding the experience of people without privilege and where possible promoting their autonomy and self-agency. Exploring and undoing unconscious bias, discrimination, and prejudice to promote integration across cultural divides.

**4. Integration of self in relation to a matrix of theory; learning theory in an embodied way across the three main schools of psychotherapy; existential/humanistic, psychodynamic and cognitive behavioural**

Having a commitment to understanding self in relationship with theory through engaging experientially in the subject learning, personal counselling, reflective journal writing and reading across the weekend topics and in self-directed learning.

Person-centred (humanistic)/Existential – committing to cultivating the relational environment for each client that promotes safety, encourages curiosity and self-agency in response to the ontological demands of living. Having personal awareness of the relationship experiences, relational techniques, and philosophy of what it means to be human.

Psychodynamic – exploring the unconscious; child development/intersubjectivity attachment theory, neurobiology/evolutionary biology, and key psychoanalytic principles with an appreciation of historical origins of contemporary theory. Recognising primary process motivations through phenomenological inquiry, focussing techniques, and the transformative role of processing emotion through to completion when emergent adaptive action tendencies are harnessed.

Cognitive Behavioural Approaches – harnessing the ego strengthening process of cognition, reflective function, and the ability to use rationality, structure, and emergent insight alongside the therapeutic relationship to enhance self-agency, emotional regulation, and self-reflective function.

**5. Integration of self in relation to techniques; learning the application of techniques to enhance the therapeutic endeavour in the interest of the client.**

Having a commitment to continued development of skills and techniques that enhance the therapeutic process and are ethically applied in the interest of clients. Using supervision to explore and understand ideas for relational interventions in counselling. Using practice/reflection in observed skills practice (triads, group supervision, OSP, group process) on techniques and underlying intentions.

**6. Awareness and integration of current competencies; recognising personal limits in counselling practice and seeking support where these are reached/breached.  
Remaining open to lifelong learning about self in relationship with others**

As students in training, it is necessary to recognise the current level of your practice expertise and work within your competency; seeking supervision where required, maintaining personal development through personal counselling, and ensuring a wide breadth of theoretical awareness to support clinical decision making.