

THE STUDENT GUIDE TO COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY APPROACHES

ADRIAN PENNINGTON



The Student Guide to Counselling & Psychotherapy Approaches

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For my family and those I care about

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About the Author

Adrian has over 5000 hours of supervised clinical experience as a counselling psychologist and performance psychologist, working with individuals, couples, pairs, groups and families. He is a clinical supervisor with more than 20 years' experience, currently supervising eight professional practitioners and students. He is a qualified teacher, and has worked in: secondary education, adult education, youth and community education, further education and higher education, mainly designing and leading counselling certificates and diplomas. He is an ex-Olympic sport psychologist, which included membership of the British Olympic Association Psychology Advisory Group. He is also a qualified mediator.

Adrian has designed, established and managed ten counselling services to date (including in schools, workplace settings, the voluntary sector and the BBC), and has managed two mediation services, as well as authoring a model of family mediation.

How to Use This Guide

The Student Guide is a handy-sized introductory book tightly packed with useful learning and development material, and an easy read.

The aim is to provide a no-frills, concise and uncomplicated summary of some major counselling and psychotherapy approaches for students, practitioners and educators.

It's also directed towards students and professionals from related disciplines who would benefit from an informative and simply-presented resource that gives the streamlined essentials to their knowledge-base. In fact, this little book literally fits inside your pocket. For ease of comparison and contrast of the methodologies described here, each therapeutic chapter is laid out in exactly the same way and at the end of the final chapter a table comprising the approaches and comparative features has been produced for even easier understanding.

The Student Guide begins with an opening chapter about psychology, the discipline from which counselling and psychotherapy have evolved. This introduction includes the origins of the three foundation schools of thought towards reducing, extinguishing and managing human psychological dysfunction, i.e., psychoanalysis, behaviourism/behavioural psychology and humanistic psychology.

One of the major differences between the Student Guide and books of a similar nature is the final chapter, which

includes issues and tips such as: a student's own therapy; clinical supervision; charging fees and collecting payment; emergencies; time limits; client non-arrivals/absences; conclusion of the counselling process; boundaries with clients (e.g., friendliness, practitioner self-disclosure).

The remaining 12 chapters offer the reader compact and clear sketches of some of the main counselling and psychotherapeutic approaches chosen for their historical or contemporary impact and relevance.

To make the reading even simpler the chapter sections are explained here:

Origins and Background: in this section the originators, theorists and developers of each approach are introduced along with information about establishing the methodologies, how they evolved, forces which drove some forward and made others stall and the current developments and issues within different perspectives. Thus, the reader can view the approaches in their developmental context.

Some Big Names: some approaches are linked to specific well-known figures but very often there are important people who may not have received the general recognition they deserve. Here, significant players are highlighted along with indicators of their contributions in a couple of sentences each for simple learning and recollection.

Some Big Ideas: each orientation tends to have its own terminology, concepts, techniques and standpoints. So, these are presented in a handy, compact style for straightforward referencing and recall.

How it Works: counselling and psychotherapy are applied disciplines so it's important to see how theory is put into practice. The focus of this section is a practical illustration of how each methodology might tackle the same case of an individual attending for counselling with generalised anxiety. Hopefully, it gives the reader a sense of the similarities and differences between orientations

and how they work when implemented with the same client. This aids the understanding of applied theory and method which is vital for all practitioners.

Who it's For: certain approaches are considered to work better with some clients and conditions than others while some are applicable to a wider population. It's helpful for you to know this particularly if you are interested in counselling in specific contexts.

Critical Considerations: over the last 20 years or so there has been a growing interest in, and demand for, evidence of the effectiveness of counselling and psychotherapeutic approaches. But, to be clear, this Guide doesn't have the scope to investigate this area in detail; instead, it aims to provide simple snap-shots of indicators of pros and cons, criticisms of, and evidence for, the methodologies presented in this book. This gives the reader some comprehension of the current status, reputation and usefulness of each orientation.

If you are specifically interested in the area of evidence for counselling approaches there are a number of texts, e.g., Mick Cooper's *Essential Research Findings in Counselling and Psychotherapy* (2011), and L. Timulak's *Research in Psychotherapy and Counselling* (2008).

Identifying Features: it helps to be able to differentiate one approach from another and this section is about what separates each methodology from its peers, presented briefly and straightforwardly in bullet-point fashion.

Reflections: this section is where I share some of my own thoughts, questions and conclusions about each perspective with the reader, which might give them something else to ponder as they develop their own learning and ideas on the included approaches.

Summary: a bite-size précis of each approach is given in 2–4 sentences making memory storage and recall so much simpler for the reader.

Learning Ideas: as an additional dimension individual awareness/developmental challenges and revision topics are included to aid thinking and growth.

Suggested Reading: for easy access, three relevant and contemporary books on the perspective in question (and related topics) are listed at the end of each counselling chapter.

Good reading.

1

In the Beginning...

Psychology

Counselling and psychotherapy derive from the mother discipline, psychology. It seems appropriate, therefore, to give a brief introduction to the roots of psychology and its early evolution which led to the emergence and continuing rise of psychological helping and *talking* approaches, some of the most important being introduced in this Guide.

The word *psychology* goes back hundreds of years to such as the Croatian humanist Marko Marulic (1450–1524) and the German philosophers Rudolf Gockel (1547–1628) and Christian Wolff (1679–1754), who further popularised it. *Psychology* comes from the Greek words *psyche*, meaning soul or mind, and *logos* which means word, discourse or reason. The English word *psychology* was introduced in 1693 by Steven Blankaart in his book *The Physical Dictionary*. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, psychology is the study of the soul. *The Oxford Dictionary of Psychology* defines it as 'the study of the nature, functions and phenomena of behaviour and mental experience'. Some describe it as the science of cognitive processes and behaviours (note the lack of reference to emotions...).

William Hamilton (1788–1856) was a Scottish metaphysician who began to use the term *psychology* in preference to *mental philosophy*. This influenced other like-minded thinkers, sowing the seeds of later Western developments in this area (metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that focuses on the fundamentals of *being* and the world).

Actually, recorded interest in the concept and function of the mind and behaviours dates back to the ancient Chinese, Egyptians, Greeks, Indians and Persians.

In its early life psychology was considered a branch of philosophy until the late 19th century when it began to develop as a discipline in its own right, mainly in the USA and Germany. Significant figures at this time included Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920), a German professor, physician, physiologist and philosopher commonly known as the father of Experimental Psychology. Another was Edward B. Titchener (1867–1927), a British psychologist who studied under Wundt and, like him, was from the Structuralist school of thought, which saw the mind as having structured cognitive processes that could be understood. William James (1842–1910) was an American physician, philosopher and psychologist who became a leader of the Functionalist school of thought, which viewed psychological life in terms of a person's adaptability to their environment, and was a reaction to Structuralism. It also played a part in the rise of behaviourism, as Functionalists believed only scientifically observable behaviours were valid in studying and understanding humans.

As the new discipline of psychology was developing, other influential perspectives on studying and understanding the mind appeared, including mesmerism, the forerunner of hypnosis, presented by Franz A. Mesmer (1734–1815), a German physician. From this, the Scottish physician James Braid (1795–1860) developed hypnosis itself. Phrenology, which claimed the brain was made up of *organs*

containing human abilities, faculties and inclinations, also drew much academic interest and study. It was introduced in 1796 by another German physician Franz J. Gall (1758–1828). Phrenologists believed the size and shape of human heads indicate the size of particular organs and the extent of corresponding capabilities or dispositions, and the mind is found within the brain.

During the 19th century the natural sciences of physiology and neurology were moving forward, links being established between certain brain functions, moods and behaviours. The emergence of these two disciplines led to increased research in Experimental Psychology which directly related to the arrival of the first two major psychological therapies, Psychoanalysis and Behaviourism/Behavioural Psychology (from which Behaviour Therapy evolved). These will now be briefly introduced in order to contextualise the background and emergence of the myriad of resultant counselling and psychotherapeutic theories and approaches.

———— Psychoanalysis (please see Chapter 11) ————

This book can only scratch the surface of the foundation discipline of psychological helping; it is a huge area of major contributors, theories, ideas, innovations, developments, perspectives, schools of thought, debates, arguments, criticisms and influences.

Nevertheless, the core concept remains constant, i.e., people can be unaware of what affects their emotions, thoughts and behaviours. Therefore, we can have factors impacting us from our unconscious without knowing it. Negative factors, particularly long-standing or traumatic ones, adversely affect us to varying degrees even to the point of destruction of ourselves and/or others.

In psychoanalysis the aim is to bring the unconscious into consciousness, then if we address and understand underlying negative issues and emotions we are in a better position to manage, reduce or resolve them, allowing us to relate better to others, the world and ourselves.

With respect to the many significant names not mentioned here I briefly introduce some of the leading early characters in this most historic of psychological therapies. It begins with the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), who initially proposed the controversial idea that sexual drives are the fundamental motivators in a human's life. He drew on past and topical theories about the unconscious dimension of the mind and its effects on human behaviours and psychological states. He was inspired by the work of the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1829–1893), who researched into hypnosis. However, Freud used and then rejected hypnosis as ineffective in his psychoanalytical work, seeing *talking cures* as the way forward in reaching and releasing unconscious emotions and thoughts.

Joseph Breuer (1842–1925) was an Austrian physician and colleague of Freud who helped establish psychoanalysis.

Carl G. Jung (1875–1961), a Swiss psychiatrist, was another initial supporter of Freud but separated due to disagreements about some of the basic theories, becoming the founder of Analytical Psychology. He was the first to analyse dreams, and posited ideas like *archetypes*, *complex*, and the *collective unconscious*.

Otto Rank (1884–1939), an Austrian psychoanalyst, was a close colleague of Freud for almost 20 years, helping to battle against internal critics; he became secretary of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society and then the International Psychoanalytical Association, and was the first to use the term *pre-Oedipal*.

Sandor Ferenczi (1873–1933) was a Hungarian psychoanalyst and ally of Rank; he introduced early *object-relations*

ideas and assisted the break from classical psychoanalytical theories and techniques.

Karen Horney (1885–1952), a German-American psychoanalyst, disagreed with Freud about his theories of femininity and worked on psychoanalysis in the context of females; she is now referred to as neo-Freudian.

Melanie Klein (1882–1960) was a British-Austrian psychoanalyst sympathetic to Horney and in disagreement with Freud and his followers. Klein's own school of thought evolved as she developed Child Psychology and became a leader in Object-Relations theory, although she maintained respect for Freud and her theoretical origins.

Donald W. Winnicott (1896–1971), a British paediatrician and psychoanalyst trained by Klein, also helped the development of Object-Relations but later became a more independent thinker. He is influential for concepts like the *true self* and *false self*, and a *holding environment*.

Alfred Adler (1870–1937) was an Austrian physician, psychoanalyst and psychotherapist and another founding member of psychoanalysis. However, he was the first major figure to break away from Freud, producing his own independent personality theory. He introduced the idea of Individual Psychology and proved to have a significant impact on the evolution of counselling and psychotherapy, which is why he is presented at the end of this section, as we view the foundation psychological therapies prior to this Guide's main chapters.

Behaviourism/Behavioural Psychology

The behaviourists wanted to make psychology as scientific as possible and reacted against the other initial schools of thought, denigrating Structuralism, Gestalt Psychology and psychoanalysis even though they shared some common