

Why Philosophy is a worthwhile topic for counsellors to study Pauline Enright 24.02.26

Philosophy for Beginners is pre-recorded video course that teaches the skills of Philosophy

The course would benefit counsellors as the skills they would learn would:

- Help them personally as they could apply them in private life.
- Help them professionally as they could apply them when working with clients.
- Philosophy is where counselling and psychology originated.
- Some of the benefits of Philosophy and *Philosophy for Beginners* are outlined below.

Philosophy is the activity of studying important life questions, such as:

- 'How should I live my life'
- 'What is important to me?'
- 'What does it mean to be ethical?'
- 'From where do I get my moral compass?'
- 'Is morality a private affair?'
- 'How far do my ethical responsibilities go?' and many more.

Philosophy teaches critical thinking skills, such as:

- How to identify flaws in arguments
- Difference between facts and opinions
- How to look at something in a different way
- How and why people have different perspectives on the same thing
- What counts as evidence
- What counts and knowledge
- Why being pro-active in developing critical thinking skills is important
- Explores and explains Socratic questioning

Critical thinking is traditionally accepted to be ethical thinking, a sign of personal integrity.

** While all the above skills are important to good counselling, the last two points are especially valuable. In counselling we listen to people who are often distressed, and need a discerning ear if we are to be of help to them. Critical thinking skills will help us to develop that. Regarding Socratic questioning, it is a keystone in both Philosophy and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. In fact, Philosophy is where CBT took it from.

Benefits of the course 'Philosophy for Beginners are that it teaches all the above skills in simple, easy-accessible language. Below are just a few examples:

- Explains how our attitudes towards 'existence' affects our ethical principles. For example, what we view a 'person' to be affects how we treat each other. This comes up often in counselling, especially in couples counselling or dealing with disability or cultural difference.
 - Explores knowledge and what it means to know something, as opposed to thinking that we know when we really don't.
 - Describes ethical systems and principles of ethical decision making, such as, what matters to us, the action itself, the consequences, or what does the action do for the person performing it? All these questions are relevant to working with clients, as well as to our own personal development and integrity. There is much more in the course.
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