

Certificate in Counselling Skills Whilst Working with Children & Young People Aged 11–18 @ QLS Level 4

40 Guided Learning Hours | 10 Weeks | 4 Hours per Week

Beginning Thursday 15 October 2026, ending 17 December 2026, from 6 pm to 10 pm each evening

Mode of training: In Person

Course Overview

Working therapeutically with young people aged 11–18 requires additional knowledge, skills and professional awareness beyond those normally required when supporting adults.

Young people may present with complex emotional and psychological difficulties while practitioners must also navigate important issues including consent, confidentiality, safeguarding, parental responsibility, risk, information sharing and the young person's developing autonomy.

This specialist Level 4, 40 GLH programme has been designed to develop the knowledge, confidence and practical counselling skills required when supporting young people aged 11–18.

The programme combines counselling skills, adolescent development, legal and ethical responsibilities, safeguarding and practical application with an in-depth exploration of some of the most significant difficulties affecting young people today.

Developed with Reference to BACP CYP Competencies & Curriculum

A significant feature of this programme is that its content has been developed with reference to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Competences for Work with Children and Young People and the BACP Counselling Children and Young People Training Curriculum, with teaching specifically focused on the 11–18 age range.

The programme incorporates the key areas identified within the BACP Stage 1 CYP curriculum, including:

Ethical and professional practice • Child protection and safeguarding • Child and adolescent development and transitions • Communicating effectively with young people • Beginnings and endings in counselling • Risk assessment and management • Young people's mental health • Working within different counselling settings

Rather than teaching these areas simply as theory, they will be integrated throughout the programme and applied to realistic situations practitioners may encounter when working with young people.

Legal, Ethical & Safeguarding Practice

Students will develop their understanding of the additional responsibilities involved when working therapeutically with someone under the age of 18, including:

Gillick competence

Fraser Guidelines

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

Child protection and safeguarding

Consent and capacity

Parental responsibility
Working with parents and carers
Confidentiality and its limitations
UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
Record keeping and information sharing
Risk assessment and risk management
Suicide and self-harm risk
Safety planning
Professional boundaries
Scope and limits of competence
Referral and signposting
Multidisciplinary and inter-agency working
Clinical supervision
BACP ethical principles and CYP competencies

Particular attention will be given to the practical dilemmas practitioners encounter when balancing the young person's right to confidentiality and developing autonomy with safeguarding responsibilities and the appropriate involvement of parents, carers and other professionals.

10-Week Programme

Week 1 – Introduction to Working Therapeutically with Young People Aged 11–18

Understanding adolescent emotional, psychological and social development; establishing the therapeutic relationship; communicating effectively with young people; contracting; beginnings and endings; confidentiality; consent; boundaries; parental responsibility; working with parents/carers; Gillick competence; Fraser Guidelines; safeguarding; the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995; GDPR and professional responsibilities.

Week 2 – Suicidal Ideation, Self-Harm & Safety Planning

Recognising and responding to suicidal thoughts and self-harming behaviours. Warning signs; risk and protective factors; suicidal thoughts, plans and intent; understanding the functions of self-harm; asking appropriately about suicide; assessing and managing risk; confidentiality; safeguarding; parental involvement; safety planning; referral and escalation.

Week 3 – Bereavement by Suicide, Grief & Loss

Supporting a young person following the suicide of a parent, carer, sibling, relative, friend or other significant person.

Students will consider traumatic grief, guilt, anger, blame, stigma, developmental understanding of death, anniversaries and triggers, suicide contagion and postvention, alongside recognising potential increases in suicide or self-harm risk following bereavement.

Week 4 – Anxiety, Exam Stress & Performance Pressure

Understanding generalised anxiety, social anxiety, panic, avoidance and school-related anxiety.

Particular attention will be given to exam and assessment stress, including GCSEs, A Levels and further education, as well as driving tests, interviews, sporting activities and other performance pressures.

Students will explore perfectionism, fear of failure, parental expectations, grounding, anxiety management and emotional regulation.

Week 5 – Depression, Relationships, Break-Up & Rejection

Recognising how depression may present in adolescence, including low mood, irritability, withdrawal, hopelessness, reduced motivation, sleep difficulties and isolation.

The session will also explore adolescent relationships, first relationships, break-ups, rejection, jealousy, attachment, abandonment, unhealthy or controlling relationships and the impact of social media.

Particular consideration will be given to increased self-harm and suicide risk following significant relationship loss or rejection.

Week 6 – PTSD, Trauma & Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Understanding trauma, PTSD, complex and developmental trauma and the potential impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Areas explored will include abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, family breakdown, parental difficulties, attachment disruption, dissociation, trauma triggers, hyper- and hypo-arousal, resilience and protective factors.

Students will consider trauma-informed practice, grounding and stabilisation alongside recognising the limits of professional competence.

Week 7 – Eating Disorders & Body Image

Understanding eating disorders affecting young people, with particular emphasis on bulimia nervosa, alongside anorexia nervosa, binge-eating disorder and ARFID.

Students will consider body image, control, shame, secrecy, social media influences, warning signs and potential physical and medical risks.

Particular consideration will be given to professional boundaries and recognising when specialist referral, medical assessment or multidisciplinary intervention is required.

Week 8 – Bullying, Cyberbullying & Online Harm

Understanding physical, verbal and relational bullying, social exclusion and cyberbullying.

The session will explore social media, online harassment, peer pressure, grooming and exploitation, sexting and intimate image sharing, pornography and other online harms.

Students will consider the impact of bullying on self-esteem, anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide risk, alongside safeguarding responsibilities and appropriate involvement of parents/carers, schools and other agencies.

Week 9 – Pregnancy, Sexual Health, Consent & Safeguarding

Supporting a young person who discloses pregnancy or raises concerns relating to sexual health.

This session provides an important opportunity to apply Gillick competence and Fraser Guidelines in practice alongside consent, capacity, confidentiality, parental responsibility, safeguarding, coercion, exploitation, healthy and unhealthy relationships and appropriate information sharing.

Students will consider how to provide a safe, non-judgemental and non-directive environment while recognising when referral to appropriate health, safeguarding or other professionals is required.

Week 10 – Neurodiversity: Autism & ADHD – Integration of CYP Practice

Understanding autism and ADHD in young people, including masking, sensory differences, communication needs, executive functioning, emotional regulation, school difficulties, bullying and associated anxiety or low mood.

Students will consider practical adaptations to counselling and helping relationships that can make support more accessible and effective for neurodivergent young people.

The final part of the programme will bring learning together through complex case material and practical application, integrating safeguarding, risk assessment, Gillick competence, confidentiality, GDPR, parental responsibility, the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, record keeping, endings, referral, supervision and multidisciplinary working.

Additional Issues

A range of additional difficulties affecting young people will be incorporated throughout the programme, including domestic abuse, childhood sexual abuse, grooming and exploitation, family breakdown, parental separation, parental mental-health difficulties, substance and alcohol misuse, school refusal, peer pressure, social media, online harms, grief and loss, low self-esteem, anger and emotional dysregulation.

Learning Through Practice

This programme is designed to go beyond classroom theory.

Students will participate in case discussions, reflective exercises, practical counselling skills and role-play, applying their learning to realistic situations involving young people aged 11–18.

Examples may include a young person who:

- Discloses suicidal thoughts
- Is self-harming but does not want their parents informed
- Makes a safeguarding disclosure
- Has experienced a bereavement by suicide
- Is being bullied or exploited online
- Discloses a pregnancy
- Is experiencing significant trauma or emotional distress
- Requires adaptations because of Autism or ADHD

Students will also consider situations where a parent or carer requests information about what a young person has disclosed, requiring the practitioner to balance confidentiality, consent, safeguarding, risk and parental responsibility.

The emphasis throughout is on developing the ability to think, assess, communicate and respond safely and ethically in real practice.

Who Is the Programme For?

The programme is suitable for those who work with, or have an interest in working with, young people aged 11–18, including:

Qualified counsellors • Student counsellors • Youth workers • Community workers • Social workers • Teachers • Support workers • Other professionals working with young people

There are no formal academic entry requirements, making the programme accessible to a broad range of professionals.

For students and qualified counsellors, the programme provides an opportunity to develop specialist knowledge and counselling skills relevant to therapeutic work with young people and to consider the additional competencies required for CYP practice.

Employment & Professional Development

Developing specialist counselling skills for working with young people can enhance existing professional practice and may support opportunities across a wide range of settings, including schools, colleges, universities, youth services, community and voluntary organisations, counselling agencies, charities, family support services, mental-health and wellbeing projects and private counselling practice.

For qualified counsellors, the programme provides valuable specialist professional development for those wishing to extend their knowledge and skills when working with young people. For student counsellors and other professionals, it can strengthen existing practice and provide a foundation for continued professional development within this specialist area.

Overall Aim

By completion of the programme, students should have significantly developed their knowledge, confidence and counselling skills when working with young people aged 11–18, together with a greater understanding of the legal, ethical, safeguarding and professional responsibilities associated with this work.

Throughout the programme, the young person's voice, developing autonomy, safety, wellbeing and therapeutic relationship remain central.

Additional information for MACP student counsellors

Please note that, before working with clients aged 11–18, student counsellors must complete a minimum of 20 supervised client hours working with adults.

Student counsellors may then claim up to 30 hours of clinical practice with children and young people, **which can be counted towards the SEG Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Practice.**

Fees: This qualification is £695.00. However, all current and former JMC students can enrol for the discounted rate of just £495.00.

There are two options to pay;

Option One: Pay in full on or before October 1 2026; total fees payable £450.00.

Option Two: Pay a deposit of £195.00 on or before October 1 2026, followed by two payments of £150.00 in November and December 2026; total fees payable £495.00.

What to do now: If you intend to enrol for this training, please complete the short application form attached and send it back to us at your earliest convenience. Places are confirmed when payment is made.

“Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.”
— *Margaret Mead*