

Expectations for students undertaking the Certificate in Counselling Skills

The Certificate in Counselling Skills course aims to equip you with the tools, knowledge, and self-awareness you will need to be an effective listener. This course consists of both synchronous and asynchronous learning. In the taught classes you will be provided with an opportunity to participate in discussions and exercises to embed the theory, along with practice sessions to develop and build your skills.

It is expected that you will access the materials online on MyAberdeen and conduct further research on the topic prior to class. You should expect to spend **15 hours' study per week for the two-year course** and **30 hours' study per week for the variant, one-year course**, consisting of theoretical reading; one or two 2-hour classes (depending whether you are undertaking the one-year or two-year course) and assessment writing (Weekly log, essay, review of practice and participation). As the variant is an expedited route to completing the Certificate, the course can be experienced as very intense, both in terms of the theoretical learning being undertaken, as well as the self-development involved.

You need to ensure you can set time aside to undertake this course, particularly if you are considering the variant option. I would also advise you make sure you have support in place, as the topics may trigger previous difficulties.

As previously mentioned, the counselling skills courses cover very emotive topics around some very difficult life experiences, especially in module 3 of the two-year course (module 2 of the one-year course). These topics include:

- Anxiety, Depression and Psychosis
- Addiction
- Abuse
- Sexuality and Gender
- Race and Culture
- Loss, Bereavement and Suicide

This is why we ask students to take time to consider whether this course is suitable for you at this time. The course asks you to look at your own life experiences and consider how this might impact you as a listener. You are also required to participate in triad practice sessions as a listener, speaker and observer and you need to be aware that you might find it difficult either sharing, or listening to, some painful experiences. If you feel this might be a struggle for you, I encourage you to pick a different elective, as you would not wish to have to make up the credits (15 credits per semester for the two-year course and 30 credits per semester for the one-year course) if you had to leave the course midway through.