

Find out about

## Using Counselling Skills

This guide will help you decide whether the Using Counselling Skills course is right for you. It gives you all the essential information you need about the course and studying with NEC. You can also speak to our friendly team (details at the end of this guide) who can advise you.

### About this course

The course is designed to help you to start to develop the essential counselling skills needed to become a skilful and effective support to others. Even if you are not planning to gain a counselling qualification, you may wish to be more effective when you help other people.

Counselling skills are useful in all walks of life – we often counsel ourselves or a friend/family member who is going through a difficult time. Maybe they need you to provide advice or to just be a good listener. Learning how to put these into practice could help change someone's life as well as your own.

It's important to remember that this is an introductory course and becoming a qualified counsellor involves much more training.

### What's included with the course?

When you enrol you will receive the following:

- access to *learn@nec* website
- online access to course materials which you can download and print or study on screen
- tuition from your personal tutor for up to six months
- a free e-book version of any essential textbook(s) where possible
- supporting materials including a Time Planner to help you plan your study timetable and information which explains how to enter for exams
- NEC's guide to study skills: *How to Succeed as an Independent Learner* plus guidance on spelling, punctuation and grammar
- details of how to contact your personal tutor and an NEC course coordinator.

## What's not included?

- exam fees where exam(s) or assessed coursework are necessary
- additional textbooks for some courses.

## Your goals and this course

Before deciding to enrol on this course, think about what you want to achieve. For example, you may want to:

- develop your skills in the subject and learn more about it for your own satisfaction and interest
- gain the qualification in order to improve job prospects or go onto further study such as A levels, a vocational qualification or a degree programme.

It's important to check that this course will help you to achieve your goals. One way is to research a college where you'd like to study in future or maybe the Open University to find out if this course is part of the entry requirements.

If you're still unsure whether this course is right for you, you can contact the NEC Course Advice Team (details at the end of this guide).

## Learning with NEC

As a student with NEC you're in charge: you can enrol at any time and you choose where and when to study and set your own deadlines. This means that you can fit the time you spend studying around work and family commitments. Such independence can be attractive, but it can also be demanding. This is why NEC's courses support and guide you every step of the way.

NEC has been delivering home study or distance learning courses for over 50 years and, with an average of over 7000 students each year, is a leader in providing courses for GCSE, A level and vocational courses. Drawing on our experience and on research findings into the way adults learn, we develop enjoyable courses that include:

- carefully designed course materials
- individual support from an expert tutor
- access to our virtual learning environment, *learn@nec*
- thorough induction to the course systems.

## learn@nec

The *learn@nec* website is our virtual learning environment and the gateway to your course and the NEC community. Its flexible design means you can study whenever you want and wherever you want. *learn@nec* is where you'll be able to discuss your course with your peers, your tutor and the team at NEC. It's also where you'll access your course materials.

You can also save and print our materials at home if you want to, so you can work offline.

## Course materials

All of our course materials are written and selected by subject matter experts, including experienced teachers, examiners and authors. The content is closely matched to the specification, so you can be confident that the course covers what you need to learn to prepare for the qualification.

The course materials are designed to provide a clear guide to your work through the course. The text is easy to follow, with examples, illustrations, activities, additional reading where appropriate, revision points and helpful suggestions that bring each subject to life. It is organised into topics and sections to give a clear path through the course. And it is structured to build your knowledge, skills and understanding step by step.

Assignments help you to check your learning. You submit these to your tutor for marking, feedback and advice.

In addition to the written course materials you will be directed to other resources such as useful videos, interactive quizzes and a free e-book of the essential course textbook, where applicable.

*'I have been interested in counselling for a long time and chose the course as a way of learning more about it in a structured way. I found it gave me the insight into the subject I was looking for. Studying with NEC has built up my confidence and added to my knowledge. Longer term, I hope to go on and study for a degree.'*

**Astero, NEC counselling student**

*'I had a look at attending a local college, but this was the best option for me because of its flexibility. If you know you can motivate yourself, and you don't have problems working on your own, I would absolutely recommend it. It allows me to choose when I do my assignments, so whilst my children might be busy doing something else I can do some study; or, if my husband's working late and they're in bed, I can sit down and attack a few questions. I didn't want it to encroach on family life, so I've been doing it in the odd hours I get to myself, which are not many when you've got three children!'*

**Sarah Yewman**

*'I feel very grateful for the chance to start this course as I believe it's going to progress me far in life.'*

**NEC Business Start-Up student**

*'It has now been over six months since I began my courses with you, and I am extremely impressed by the standard of tutoring and the resources available for students to succeed. Thank you!'*

**NEC Biology student**

To check out the course materials you can download a sample from the course description page on the website.

## Tutor support

As a student with NEC you'll have a personal tutor who will support you while you work through the course. NEC tutors are subject experts who understand distance learning.

The course is comprehensive, so you'll find that you don't need your tutor to be a 'teacher': your tutor is there to mark and comment on your assignment work and to answer any queries you have about the subject to help you get the most from the course.

Your tutor will give you helpful and encouraging feedback, so that you know what you're doing well and where you can make improvements. Above all, your tutor is on your side and will want to see you succeed.

You can also contact NEC's student support team with any questions you have, if they are related to the subject you are studying, and they will liaise with your tutor on your behalf.

## Course overview

### What is the qualification?

Passing this course will provide a unit accreditation from Training Qualifications UK (TQUK), which counts towards the Level 2 Certificate in Counselling. You would need to study further units to gain the full certificate.

### Entry requirements

There are no formal entry requirements, but you will need to be at least 19 years of age and have a good command of basic English. You will need to be able to make an audio recording of a helping dialogue, or be able to ask a witness to validate and confirm the helping conversation you have had. This is an online course, so you will also need access to the internet.

*'I really like using the site as it is easy to navigate and is well structured. Furthermore, everything is nicely organised and so allows me to remain organised when studying.'*

**NEC History and English student**

**Tracey is a tutor for NEC's Psychology, and Sociology courses**

She is a qualified teacher and social worker and has completed postgraduate training in Learning Disability Studies. The best thing about being a tutor for NEC, Tracey says, is:

*'NEC students. They never fail to inspire and motivate me. Many of our students work in their own homes and have to be disciplined to study like this, so it is always great to have enthusiastic students who work hard to complete their courses.'*

## Completion time

You should allow for approximately 30 hours' study time plus additional time for completing the assignments. You will have tutor support for a period of up to 6 months from the date you enrol.

## Essential textbooks

This course is entirely self-contained so no additional textbooks are required.

However, you may find it helpful to purchase '*Counselling Skills in Everyday Life*' by K Geldard and D Geldard, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, for additional reading. This is not included in your course fee.

## Assessment

There are four assignments including a recorded conversation. Completing the assignments will help your tutor to assess your progress. You will need to complete all of these in order to gain accredited status by Training Qualification UK.

At several points in the course there are exercises with the option of working with a volunteer. If you choose this option, you must ensure that the volunteer you work with:

- is an adult,
- is in good mental health,
- agrees to avoid any subject which is currently affecting them emotionally.

## Audio

The audio files supplied as part of the course are extracts of helping conversations to use with some of the activities in the course and with two of the assignments.

## When to enrol?

You can enrol at any time.

## What next?

We hope this guide has answered any questions you may have and helped you to decide whether this course is right for you. Remember you can download a sample of the course from the course information page on our website.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us using the details below.

**If you are ready to enrol, you have various options:**

- **enrol online** – for many courses you can enrol online through our website. Just choose your course, click ‘enrol now’ and then checkout
- **enrol by telephone** – just call our course advice team free on 0800 389 2839 and we can take your details over the telephone
- **pay in full** – you can pay in full with a credit or debit card
- **pay in instalments** – if spreading the cost would be useful, we can arrange that for you. Just call our course advice team to organise this.

## Contact us

There are many ways to get in touch if you have any more questions.

**Freephone:** 0800 389 2839

**Email us:** [info@nec.ac.uk](mailto:info@nec.ac.uk)

**Website:** [www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk)

You can also find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)