



NATIONAL  
COUNSELLING &  
PSYCHOTHERAPY  
SOCIETY

# **Relationship Therapist Register with Psychosexual Therapist Sub-Register**

## **Entry Requirements and Training Standards**

## Relationship Therapist

Relationship/couples therapy will normally involve 2 or more clients in the sessions. It can include sessions with individuals if the clients have come for relationship therapy. It does not include work with a relationship focus where the contract is with only one client.

### 1. Entry Requirements

Entry to the Relationship Therapist register is via 3 routes.

#### Route 1: Recognised Qualifications route

This route is for Registrants on the NCPS Accredited Register for counsellors and psychotherapists who have acquired a qualification in relationship/couples therapy recognised by the Society for this purpose. These qualifications will be at a minimum of RQF Level 5 or equivalent as assessed by the Society and will contain a requirement for assessed supervised practice in training.

See [Appendix A](#) for a list of currently recognised qualifications

#### Route 2: Portfolio route

This route is for Registrants on the NCPS Accredited Register for counsellors and psychotherapists who can provide evidence of some specialist training and experience in the field of Relationship Therapy together with experience of relevant practice. Specialist training will have been at a minimum of RQF Level 5 or equivalent and will be consistent with the training standards shown below.

A minimum of 450 hours of supervised practice will be required. A minimum of 200 of these hours must have been relationship/couples therapy. Evidence in the form of confirmation of competencies by a supervisor is required.



## Route 3: Complex applications

Applications which contain complex information; for example, from long standing counsellors where historical training routes show a marked difference from current training routes, may be referred to the Professional Standards Committee for a complex case review. The Committee will ensure that the application meets the Society's published standards. Unsuccessful applicants will be assisted with clear guidance about what is required to meet criteria for this specialist register.

## 2. Training standards

Recognised qualifications must provide a solid foundation for therapists who have an existing scope of practice in working with adult individual clients. They must enable trainees to become confident and capable in working with couples or other forms of intimate committed relationships such as polyamorous, polygamy and arranged marriages.

Trainees must acquire the skills to work with the dynamics of relationships, as well as common issues arising in couple therapy – such as desire, conflict, potential separation, lack of relationship vision, communication blocks, non-consummation, endings.

Trainings must be inclusive of GSRD (Gender & Sexual & Relationship Diversity) to encompass intimate relationships other than couples.

Applicants with recognised qualifications, and successful applicants via the Portfolio route, will be able to evidence competence, confirmed by a supervisor, using the following guidelines:

### 2.1 Self-Awareness and Reflexivity

**2.1.1** Monitoring and maintaining professional effectiveness as a relationship counsellor through regular supervision and a cycle of continuous improvement and development using feedback and critical reflection.

**2.1.2** Planning and implementing a programme of continuing professional development.

**2.1.3** Using reflexivity to manage own emotional wellbeing and to ensure that personal history and emotions are kept separate from the clients' so that the 'self' of the counsellor does not adversely affect their therapeutic relationship with clients.

**2.1.4** Using relevant theory including humanistic, systemic, and psychodynamic perspectives to understand own self, personal history, and patterns of relating.

**2.1.5** Exploring and challenging own beliefs, values, fears, and prejudices to enable client centred practice.

**2.1.6** Demonstrating knowledge of and sensitivity to, equality and difference.

## **2.2 Knowledge**

**2.2.1** Integrating a range of appropriate counselling concepts in practice with clients.

**2.2.2** Understanding, articulating, and applying humanistic, systemic and psychodynamic concepts appropriately to practice with clients.

**2.2.3** Recognising the importance of social and cultural contexts and biological factors that impact on clients and acknowledging these in clinical practice.

**2.2.4** Demonstrating awareness of common mental health problems and developing appropriate responses in clinical practice.

**2.2.5** Applying a safe, ethical, legal, and professional framework including the NCPS Code of Ethical Practice in clinical practice.



**2.2.6** Working within own clinical competence and referring complex cases to specialists as required (e.g., serious mental health problems, sexual dysfunction, Domestic Abuse, safeguarding concerns etc.).

## **2.3 Skills**

**2.3.1** Demonstrating a working knowledge and understanding of the skills required to deliver relationship counselling to individuals and couples.

**2.3.2** Utilising case management skills including clear contracting, referrals, signposting, sequencing of therapy, and any other actions and decisions which are needed to effect an ethical and effective course of therapy.

**2.3.3** Establishing and maintaining the boundaries and stages of the therapeutic relationship.

**2.3.4** Recognising and responding appropriately to issues of risk, especially in the context of domestic abuse, mental health, and child protection.

**2.3.5** Using measures of assessment and outcome effectively with couples and each client individually.

**2.3.6** Negotiating and managing appropriate endings with clients.

**2.3.7** Managing and responding appropriately to the needs of each partner, maintaining a neutral stance.

## Relationship and Psychosexual Therapist

### 3. Entry Requirements

Entry to the Psychosexual and Relationship Therapist sub register is via 3 routes

#### Route 1: Recognised Qualifications route

This route is for practitioners who meet the entry requirements for the Relationship Therapist register and who have acquired a specialist qualification at a minimum of RQF Level 5 or equivalent as assessed by the Society. This qualification will be one recognised by the Society to equip practitioners to work specifically with sexual problems. It will be from a specific Psychosexual therapy training or a Couple/Relationship therapy training which includes specific Psychosexual therapy training.

See [Appendix B](#) for a list of currently recognised qualifications.

#### Route 2: Portfolio route

This route is for practitioners who meet the entry requirements for the Relationship Therapist register and can provide evidence of some specialist training and experience in the field of Psychosexual Therapy together with experience of relevant practice. Specialist training will have been at a minimum of RQF Level 5 or equivalent as assessed by the Society and will be consistent with the training standards shown below. A minimum of 200 hours of supervised practice of psychosexual therapy will be required. Evidence in the form of confirmation of competencies by a supervisor is required.



### Route 3: Complex applications

Applications which contain complex information; for example, from long standing counsellors where historical training routes show a marked difference from current training routes, may be referred to the Professional Standards Committee for a complex case review. The Committee will ensure that the application meets the Society's published standards. Unsuccessful applicants will be assisted with clear guidance about what is required to meet criteria for this specialist register.

## 4. Training standards

Applicants with recognised qualifications, and successful applicants via the Portfolio route, will be able to evidence competence, confirmed by a supervisor, using the following guidelines:

**4.1** Assessing, formulating, and managing treatment of sexual dysfunctions, sexual difficulties, the aftermath of sexual abuse, and recognising if more specialist intervention is required.

Showing knowledge and understanding of:

**4.2** Psychosexual assessment including the classification and formulation of sexual and relationship problems from a range of recognised classification systems, including DSM 5 and ICD 11

**4.3** Psychosexual dysfunctions including:

**4.3.1** the correlation between organic and non-organic sexual dysfunction

**4.3.2** sexual dysfunctions specific to men and women

**4.3.3** Anatomy and physiology of sexual response

**4.4** The classification and formulation of sexual and relationship problems from a range of recognised classification systems, including DSM 5 and ICD 11

**4.5** Sexual orientations, sexual preferences, and sexual diversity including the implications of open non-monogamy, BDSM etc.

**4.6** Psychosexual development and sexuality throughout the life cycle including the effects of adolescence, ageing, sexual orientation, faith, culture and parenthood.

**4.7** Gender classifications, trans, non-binary and cis and the associated language of gender diversity.

**4.8** Classification of Gender Dysphoria within DSM V and ICD 11 and treatment protocols.

**4.9** Queer Theory and Intersectionality when applied to gender diversity. The differences between Gender and Sex, the influences of biology and societies expectations of gender and how identity develops.

**4.10** Transition, legal issues, effects of cross sex hormones and surgical interventions for both Male to Female and Female to Male transitioners.

**4.11** Compulsive sexual behaviours and desire disorders

**4.12** Specific psychosexual therapy interventions and specific relationship enhancement tools

**4.13** Physical treatments and sex aids in the management of sexual problems.

**4.14** Medical interventions and medication.

**4.15** The importance of remaining up to date with professional developments in the field of psychosexual therapy.

**4.16** The use of outcome measures in psychosexual therapy.



## Appendix A

### Currently recognised qualifications in relationship/couples therapy for Relationship Therapists

**1.** Relate post-qualifying Certificate in Relational Counselling (CPCAB Level 5)

**2.** Relate Diploma in Relationship Counselling (CPCAB Level 5)

**3.** A combination of the following 2 Relate legacy qualifications:

Relate Level 4 Introduction to Relationship Counselling (1 year) PLUS Level 5 Diploma in Relationship Counselling (1 year)

**4.** London Foundation Certificate in Counselling and Psychotherapy Skills and Theories PLUS London Diploma in Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy

**5.** NAOS Institute Advanced Diploma in Couples Therapy

**6.** CCPE Diploma in Transpersonal Couple Counselling & Intimate Relationship Psychotherapy

**7.** Gestalt Centre Certificate in Couples and Relationships Therapy

**8.** Tavistock Relationships Clinical Qualification in Couple Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy OR Clinical Qualification in Psychodynamic Couple and Individual Counselling and Psychotherapy

**9.** IFT – Certificate: Families and Couples

**10.** IFT – Postgraduate Certificate – Intermediate Systemic Practice with Families And Couples

**11.** CICS two-year Diploma in Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy

## Appendix B

### Currently recognised qualifications in psychosexual therapy for Relationship and Psychosexual Therapists

1. Relate Professional Certificate in Psychosexual Therapy
2. London Diploma in Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy
3. Naos Advanced Diploma in Relationship Psychotherapy with PG Cert in Clinical Sexology
4. Tavistock Relationships Diploma in Psychosexual Therapy
5. Centre for Psychosexual Health Diploma in Integrative Psychosexual Therapy
6. Contemporary Institute of Clinical Sexology Diploma in Clinical Sexology
7. Doncaster College MSc Contemporary Psychosexual Therapy
8. University of Central Lancashire Post Graduate Diploma in Psychosexual Therapy / MSC Psychosexual Therapy
9. Relationships Scotland's Diploma in Sex and Relationship Therapy
10. CCPE Diploma in Transpersonal Couple Counselling & Intimate Relationship Psychotherapy



Applicants who have graduated from a COSRT Accredited training are also eligible.

Applications from graduates from other comparable trainings will be considered on their merits by our Professional Standards Committee.

In devising these standards, we have drawn on:

The Society's current general training standards

The work of subject experts including:

The College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists' published standards

Relate

London Diploma in Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy

NAOS Institute

**If you have any questions about this guidance, please email [standards@ncps.com](mailto:standards@ncps.com)**



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