

Relationship Therapy: Working with Couples and Intimate Systems



Course Information 2024/2025

Contents:

• Contact Details	3
• A note about Privacy	3
• Course Materials	3
• Dates – Times – Tutors	3
• Breaks	4
• Contact if Late	4
• Course Curriculum	4-6

CONTACT DETAILS

Lead Tutor		
Chris Williams	07905 623330	chris@thecsc.net
Supporting Tutor		
Sheila McCarthy-Dodd	07875 708604	sheila@thecsc.net
Course Supports		
Suzanne Robinson	07944 442001	suz.rob29@gmail.com
Administration		
Hannah Cox, Course Manager	07929 313976	courses@thecsc.net

A Note About Privacy

In advance of the training, we will send you a consent form, to ask if you are willing to share your contact details with the rest of the group. This enables peer practice groups to be established and group sharing to occur. These details are only to be used regarding the course and are NOT to be used to promote yourself, your work or anything else. We may also take a group photographs for the CSC newsletter or website. Please do not join the photograph if you do not wish to be publicly included.

Course Materials

All course materials, dates and Zoom links will be available to you on the [CSC Course Hub](#). When you enrol on the training you will automatically be registered on the hub. Each Zoom session will be recorded and uploaded on to the 'Materials' section of the hub.

Module dates / Times

Please note that all times are based on UK time.

Module	Date	Time	Days	Tutors
Module 1	9-11 Oct 2024	9.30–5.30	Wednesday - Friday	Chris/Sheila
Module 2	4-6 Dec 2024	9.30–5.30	Wednesday - Friday	Chris/Sheila - TBC
Module 3	5-7 Feb 2025	9.30–5.30	Wednesday - Friday	Chris/Sheila - TBC
Module 4	9-11 Apr 2025	9.30–5.30	Wednesday - Friday	Chris/Sheila

Breaks

We will ensure that there will be plenty of breaks throughout each day.

Course Supports

The course will be supported by two course supports. They are there to support the tutors and of course you. Their role is in the form of an internship. This is available to students who have completed the Foundation, Applied or Relationship Therapy Training in the past and would like to continue to develop their knowledge and experience of systemic constellation work. They will ensure a smooth continuity between modules and tutors and will be there to assist you if needed.

Please note

If you are going to be late, or are unable to attend for any reason, please call or text one of the Course Supports (see 'Contact Details' section above)

Course Curriculum

This course will be led by **Christopher Williams**, BACP & UKCP, an internationally renowned trainer and couple's therapist working with both Gestalt and Systemic approaches, and **Sheila McCarthy-Dodd**, a highly experienced constellation practitioner, who has worked extensively in Systemic Family Constellations since 1996. Sheila has a well-established therapy practice for individuals, couples and supervision. **Bernd Leygraf**, from the NAOS Institute, will be teaching a day on Sex Therapy.

This training was originally created and designed by **Judith Hemming** who drew on her extensive professional experience of working with couples over several decades.

The purpose of this training is to give participants the opportunity to extend their therapeutic, coaching and/or systemic practice to include working with intimate and other relationship systems. It is assumed that participants will already have basic skills in working with individuals and their issues, and therefore the course focus is on the shifts and additional skills needed to be of help when working with couples.

The teaching is intended to help therapists and coaches 'see' and work with systems, including the three, or more, interacting systems that are alive in the room when working with couples or two-person systems, and the wider and deeper family systems that surround the couple and often emerge and influence in hidden ways. We draw on both Gestalt theory as a basic orientation, and the systemic constellation philosophy developed by Bert Hellinger. We will also focus on presence, and an understanding of the many common contexts that bring couples into therapy or the issues that arise in two person systems in organisation.

DURING THE FOUR MODULES WE WILL DEVELOP:

1. A basic framework

- The intimate relationship as a life journey, connecting two separate journeys.
- An understanding of the changing tasks of a relationship over time.
- An understanding of the cultural shifts in the institution of marriage.
- A look at what a relationship is for, and what intimacy consists of.
- Understanding of the perennial paradox between autonomy and communion.

2. The process model of intervening

- How a couple 'dance' together in real time in the room. This is a hugely helpful but challenging Gestalt model, and forms the practical basis of the therapeutic work or effective coaching interventions.
- Positive framing, even-handedness, phenomenological tracking, setting up practice opportunities.

3. Systemic thinking and interventions

- An understanding of the motivations and action, ways of managing exchange, culture, roles and beliefs, as they develop through personal loyalties and deeper systemic entanglements and burdens.
- Moving the therapeutic focus between the present, the near past and the further past.
- A basic understanding of the ordering forces that support the flow of love and intimacy and healthy partnership working.
- Using the constellation process in the couple's therapy room and healthy partnership working.

4. The therapist as instrument

- The special tasks and contributions of presence and stance, capacity to model and teach.
- Self disclosure, provocation, parallel process, projection, transference and counter-transference.
- The use of systemic sentences to promote primary energy.

We will also look at specific topics that often arise with couples:

- **Sex** - its power, cost and consequences, the role of advice and training, the impact of pornography and a sexualized and image conscious culture. Affairs, betrayals, aging, fantasy.
- **Same and different sex relationships** – similarities and differences, unconscious prejudices; gender issues.
- **Consensual non-monogamy** - examining mono-normativity; exploring the benefits and challenges of CNM.
- **Needing and reaching out** - the value of this and how to work with it in the room. Intimacy, contact and withdrawal – the Gestalt interactive cycle as a map.
- **Children** - fertility issues, parenting and parentification, effect of separation, un-launched sons, missing fathers.
- **Families moving together** - the issues raised by our in-law relationships, and blended families.
- **Earlier relationships** - the place of previous partners.
- **Embodiment** - fantasy, splitting, the body as source.

- **Loss** - through bereavement, divorce, separation. Grief. Empty nests.
- **Cross-cultural issues** – race, sex, class, diversity, politics, age gaps, and money.
- **The Individual** - and their place in the couple. Using constellating techniques with couples – genograms and desktop mapping.
- **Non-intimate couples** – throughout the course we will also be paying attention to working with non-intimate couples, i.e. two-person systems.

General principles of the course include:

- Each subject will be learnt by way of teaching, discussion and experiential exercises.
- Live couples will be invited for demonstration work.

