

Postgraduate Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling (PGDPC)

Programme Guide



The School of Positive Psychology

Singapore • Japan • Hong Kong • Philippines

Established in 2007

The School of Positive Psychology is the first education and training facility in Asia dedicated to promoting the art, science, and practice of positive psychology and psychotherapy.

Alongside providing education and credentials, we are dedicated to advancing research, delivering impactful training, and championing the principles of positive psychology to empower individuals and communities to thrive and flourish.

Our Vision

To help the world thrive through wellbeing-based education and thought leadership.

Our Mission

To empower people with evidence-based, high-quality positive psychology and psychotherapy education, research, and professional development that fosters compassion and courage, and builds thriving communities, organisations, and societies.

The School of Positive Psychology is registered under the Enhanced Registration Framework (ERF). The ERF is administered by the SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG). ERF requires all students to be covered under the Industry-Wide Course (IWC) fee insurance scheme. In The School of Positive Psychology, this is provided through Lonpac Insurance Bhd.

For more details, please visit <https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/pei>

Why You'll Love Learning with Us

- **Culturally Relevant Learning**
Our programmes are tailored to resonate with the Asian market, reflecting an “intentional localism” approach that ensures cultural relevance and practical application.
- **Experiential Education**
While knowledge is abundant, the real challenge lies in its application. We focus on experiential, practical, and applicable learning, equipping you with tools to thrive in real-world scenarios.
- **A Personalised Journey**
Take ownership of your learning journey. Our customised pathways and elective options empower you to tailor your education to your goals and interests.
- **Purposeful Assignments**
Gain clarity on assignment objectives and see the tangible benefits of your efforts. Every task is designed to maximise your investment of time and energy.
- **A Passion for Learning**
Explore the full spectrum of psychology, from its foundational principles to transformative positive practices, with opportunities to delve into topics across the mental wellbeing spectrum from -10 to +10.



Postgraduate Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling (PGDPC)

The Postgraduate Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling features a sophisticated curriculum encompassing a broad range of topics to equip individuals for a career as a mental health professional in Singapore. Set a firm foundation in clinical skillsets and choose to go deeper in highly relevant specialisations in this advanced interdisciplinary programme.

Introduction

The Postgraduate Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling (PGDPC) strives to cultivate learners with a comprehensive understanding of psychological, psychotherapeutic and counselling theories and techniques. The programme aims to equip learners with professional knowledge and skills necessary for conducting therapy effectively, while exhibiting sensitivity towards cultural nuances. Learners will also gain the ability to apply their skills in various contexts, including personal life, relationships, family, and the workplace.

Furthermore, learners will develop expertise in addressing clients' past, present and future issues, guiding them on managing issues with stress, anxiety, emotions, relationships, and personal growth. The PGDPC will also enable learners to tackle common challenges such as addictions, and family and marital issues.

Learners will be trained on the ethics in psychotherapy practice, covering areas such as standards of practice and client confidentiality. Apart from counselling and psychotherapy theories and techniques, learners will explore the science of positive psychology and its applications to mental health and wellbeing.



Duration	12 months (part-time)
Course Structure	4 terms per year
Intakes	Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct

Career Prospects

The PGDPC is committed to educating learners on varied disciplines of psychology and psychotherapy applications, as well as promoting specialised training for learners who are keen to practice counselling or psychotherapy professionally and independently in Singapore. The course is designed to specifically teach learners two types of therapy approaches that psychologists, counsellors, and psychotherapists use to conduct therapy sessions. They are Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT).

Curriculum

The PGDPC programme comprises **14 modules** that aim to enhance learners' skills and competencies, enabling them to apply their knowledge to treat various mental health and emotional challenges and symptoms. Together, these modules offer PGDPC learners a solid foundation in various aspects of psychotherapy and counselling. Below is an overview of the programme's modules:

01

PSY 01
Essentials of
Psychology and
Mental Health

How do people differ from one another? To what extent is your current behaviour shaped by your childhood development? How does motivation play a part in reaching goals? This module introduces the field of psychology as a **scientific discipline** concerned with the **study of thought and human behaviour**.

02

PSY 03
Developmental
Psychology

Developmental Psychology introduces the **study of human growth and development over the lifespan**, from conception to death. Learners will delve into the study of **major developmental stages** such as childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Topics on puberty, sexuality, adult maturity, lifestyle changes, the family life cycle, and retirement are also covered.

03

PSY 04
Introduction to
Psychotherapy and
Counselling

This module introduces the fundamental theories of psychotherapy, including psychoanalytic theories of Freud, the humanistic approach of Carl Rogers, and Choice Theory/ Reality Therapy. Learners will also learn the **fundamental skills of a therapist**, and how to apply psychotherapy and counselling to help clients in areas of development and to overcome their challenges.



04

PSY 07 Family and Marital Counselling

In this module, we examine how individuals are affected by their own families by exploring **personal conflicts and the influence of family dynamics**. Various theories and techniques in working with families and couples are discussed, equipping learners to work with teenagers, parents, couples, and families in various settings.

05

PSY 08 Group Counselling

This module allows learners to apply their knowledge in individual therapy to a **group setting**. Learners will learn how, as a therapist, to deal with difficult and defensive behaviours, create group trust, work with intense emotions, and to effectively address each group member's issue.

06

GPSY 02 Applied Positive Psychology

This module explores the science of **optimal human functioning** and unpacks concepts such as **happiness, flourishing and wellbeing**. This experiential course invites learners to engage in **critical thinking** by exploring Positive Psychology theories, models and concepts, and applying them to their cultural and unique contexts. Learners will gain a deep understanding of the **PERMAH** model pillars, and find out how these can be applied to **elevate wellbeing for self and others**.

07

PDPSY 10
Psychotherapy
Practice and Ethics
in Multicultural
Context

This module introduces the importance of professional behaviour under the Ethics Code. This module aims to teach learners the **standards of conduct, performance, and ethics** in their role as therapists. Topics will include ethical issues such as confidentiality, informed consent, dual relationships, termination, and referral. It will guide learners into making informed and reasonable decisions for their client, to behave with honesty and integrity, and to ensure that personal biases and beliefs do not interfere with therapy.

08

PDPSY 01
Cognitive
Behavioural Therapy

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a short-term, **goal-oriented psychotherapy treatment** that takes a hands-on, practical approach to problem-solving. CBT focuses on **modifying thought processes, assumptions, beliefs, and behaviours**, with the aim of **influencing disturbed emotions**. Unlike some other talk therapies, CBT addresses a client's current problems, rather than solely focusing on past issues.

CBT can be used to treat a wide range of issues, including sleeping difficulties, relationship problems, drug and alcohol abuse, anxiety, and depression. It works by **changing people's attitudes and behaviour** by focusing on their thoughts (cognitive processes), images, beliefs, and attitudes, and how these processes relate to their behaviours, as a way of dealing with emotional problems.

CBT is widely accepted as an **evidence-based and cost-effective psychotherapy** for many psychological challenges. It can be used with groups or individuals. This module provides an understanding of the principles and therapy of **Aaron T. Beck's psychotherapy model** in managing a variety of psychological disorders from both theoretical and clinical perspectives. Clinical cases and techniques are included in this module.

09

PDPSY 02
Solution Focused
Brief Therapy

Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), also known as 'solution focused herapy' or 'brief therapy', is a type of talk therapy based on social constructionist philosophy. SFBT is **future-focused, goal-directed, and focuses on solutions**, rather than the problems that brought clients to seek therapy.

SFBT encourages the development of **effective behavioural management**. Clients are encouraged to adopt a positive stance in which energy is directed towards finding satisfactory ways forward, instead of focusing on what is going wrong in a given situation.

SFBT **concentrates on what works** and ceases activities that are ineffective. A hallmark of SFBT is its **emphasis on clear, concise, realistic goal negotiations**. It is a practical, goal-driven model that grounds sessions in the present while working toward a future in which clients' current problems have a lesser impact on their lives.

This module aims to deepen learners' understanding of the SFBT approach, its underlying assumptions, core skills, and application to different clientele groups in therapeutic practice.

10

PGDPSY 07
Research Methods
in Psychology

Research Methods in Psychology is designed to give learners an overview of the diverse methods available in psychological research. This module has a focus on the scientific method, allowing learners to **apply the theoretical knowledge learned** in selecting a suitable research method for a subject matter of their choice and to reflect that in a simple proposal at the end of this module. This module will give learners a good starting point to reflect on the **impact of psychological research** in our lives.



11

PGDPSY 09 Understanding Trauma and Trauma Treatment⁽¹⁾

This module offers **strategies for effectively engaging** with clients who have experienced complex trauma. Guided by the latest advancements in trauma theory, therapy, attachment, affective neuroscience, and interpersonal neurobiology, this module is designed to equip students with essential principles to **navigate the complexities of working with trauma**. Students will develop knowledge of complex trauma, the neurobiology of trauma, as well as current trauma theories and models. They will also gain insights into the **cognitive, emotional, and behavioural impacts** of trauma, enabling them to identify signs in clients.

12

PDPSY 11 Risk Assessment

This module aims to equip students with a comprehensive understanding and practical skills to **effectively engage and respond to individuals dealing with suicidality**. Students will understand how to respond to suicide-related situations. This module is not solely theoretical, it is structured to provide students with opportunities to practice the skills they learned. Multiple role plays are designed to help **address the challenge of initiating questions and continuing with effective exploration of suicidality and self-harm**.

13

PGDPSY 12 Advanced Counselling Techniques and Interventions⁽²⁾

This module is designed for psychotherapy students seeking to **enhance their counselling skills and interventions**. Building on foundational counselling principles, this advanced module delves into **sophisticated techniques and interventions aimed at addressing complex psychological issues**. The module integrates theory with practical application, fostering a deeper understanding of the therapeutic process and enhancing students' proficiency in navigating challenging counselling scenarios.

14

PGDPSY 13 Whole Person Therapy and Case Formulation⁽³⁾

The Whole Person Therapy and Case Formulation module offers psychotherapy students an in-depth exploration of **evidence-based competencies essential for holistic therapeutic practice**. Drawing from diverse therapeutic traditions, students will delve into techniques such as **contingency management, coping and emotion regulation**, problem-solving, interpersonal skills, cognitive reappraisal, defusion/distancing, enhancing psychological acceptance, values, and mindfulness. Through theoretical insights and practical application, students will develop the skills necessary for comprehensive client-centred care. Students will explore **advanced techniques in case formulation**, considering biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors. The module integrates theory and practical applications, empowering students to develop a nuanced therapeutic stance that addresses the complexity of individuals.

^{1, 2 & 3} Prerequisite:

PSY 04 Introduction to Psychotherapy and Counselling

Practicum

Psychotherapy and counselling practicum is a requirement of the PGDPC curriculum. This will provide learners with real world experience, giving an edge to establishing a successful practice in the future.

The practicum requires **150 hours**, and may last more than one semester. Guided by supervision⁽¹⁾, students will adeptly apply evidence-based counselling techniques, professional ethics, and knowledge, thereby delivering culturally responsive therapy sessions to a diverse clientele. The incorporation of self-reflective practices is pivotal within this module, fostering continuous professional growth and promoting a culture of excellence in practice.

The entire practicum will need to be logged to ensure the learner completes the required number of hours. ● ●

Learners will apply and practice CBT and/or SFBT approaches during the practicum. Additionally, they will learn how to draw upon resilience, positive psychology and other wellbeing techniques for self-care and for professional practice.

To learn more about practicum and how TSPP can support you, scan this QR code:



● Practicum hours

Client contact ⁽²⁾	100 hrs
Indiv. supervision	20 hrs
Group supervision	30 hrs

● Before starting practicum, learners must complete the following modules:

PSY 03	Developmental Psychology
PSY 04	Introduction to Psychotherapy and Counselling
PDPSY 10	Psychotherapy Practice and Ethics in a Multicultural Context
PDPSY 11	Risk Assessment
PDPSY 01	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or
PDPSY 02	Solution Focused Brief Therapy

¹ Individual supervision fees are approximately S\$150/hour (varies by supervisor). Group supervision fees are divided among learners in the group.

² Practicum placement fees may apply depending on the site.

Specialisms

The PGDPC curriculum offers two specialisations for learners to enhance their expertise in. Here are more details about each specialisation and their respective modules.

Learners are required to complete **3 modules** for each specialism. Those who wish to take on either or both specialisms may do so concurrently or at their own pace.

WELLBEING INTERVENTIONS

GPSY 04	Mindfulness Psychology
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GPSY 05	Resilience Training for Practitioners
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GPSY 09	Strengths Development
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CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

PSY 15	Childhood and Adolescent Disorders
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PSY 16	Special Needs Education
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PSY 17	Working with Children and Adolescents
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Wellbeing Interventions

In this specialism, learners will delve into positive psychology concepts and strategies to develop their capabilities in applying wellbeing interventions in their work. As trained positive psychology practitioners, they can help their clients increase levels of happiness, foster positive relationships, identify strengths, and build resilience.

GPSY 04 Mindfulness Psychology

Mindfulness Psychology is a non-judgmental awareness of, curiosity about, and acceptance of one's present moment experience. It is becoming an increasingly popular **approach to holistic health, wellness, and thriving** for individuals and institutions. A growing body of scientific research suggests that cultivating mindfulness can robustly enhance cognitive, emotional, physical, spiritual, and social wellbeing.

In this workshop, you will equip yourself with both **theoretical and experiential understanding of mindfulness psychology**. Grounded in the assumption that effective mindfulness facilitation requires maintaining a personal mindfulness practice, this module emphasises **hands-on learning of mindfulness techniques**, explores common barriers to mindfulness and debunks the misconceptions of an effective mindfulness practice.

GPSY 05 Resilience Training for Practitioners

Resilience Training builds on research findings from four relevant fields of study which includes: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; resilience; post-traumatic growth; and positive psychology.

The module is organised around **SPARK** acronym, and teaches learners to break simple and complex situations into manageable components of **Situation, Perception, Affect, Reaction and Knowledge**. Originally developed by Prof. Ilona Boniwell and Lucy Ryan, this ground-breaking programme for developing resilience is currently employed by educational and people-centric organisations.

Learners will be introduced to a range of **resilience skills and models** that are applicable to support a non-clinical population to navigate challenges and stresses effectively. At the end of this professional workshop, the learner is certified to train others as a **'SPARK Resilience Workplace Trainer.'**

Part A (14 hours): The programme enables learners to challenge their interpretation of any life situation and consider other alternatives as they are being introduced to the **skills of assertiveness and problem solving**. Learners also **build their own 'resilience muscles'** through identifying their strengths, social support networks, sources of positive emotions and previous experiences of resilience.

Part B (7 hours): Learners will interact with **resilience strategies** and **practical ways to apply resilience** in a selected setting.

GPSY 09 Strengths Development

This module explores the **science of strengths** as the foundation of positive psychology and a guide to understanding human highest potential. Learners will learn about classifications and measures of strengths and explore the **diverse strength-based approaches** for individuals, teams, and organisations. Learners will have an opportunity to apply science-based practices to activate their strengths, learn the 'golden mean' of strengths and explore how they can apply their unique strengths constellations across life domains.



Children and Adolescents

If you aspire to work with children, the **Children and Adolescents** specialism is for you. Through this specialism, learners will gain knowledge of child and adolescent psychology, and apply specialised interventions in their work with children and youth.

PSY 15

Childhood and Adolescent Disorders

This module introduces the learners to various childhood and adolescent disorders. It explores the different disorders that these groups face, which include depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and substance abuse. Special needs such as autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) will also be discussed. Learners will be taught how to **identify and differentiate between the various disorders**, which is vital in helping individuals who are suffering from them.

PSY 16

Special Needs Education

This module will deepen your understanding of children with special needs. **From identification to management and development**, early intervention is crucial for the growth and development of children with special needs. By understanding their challenges and implementing strategic interventions, learners can help maximise their potential and improve their chances of independent living. In this module, learners will be taught interventions that are designed to help children with special needs learn skills that help them achieve a **higher level of personal self-sufficiency** and success in school and their community.

PSY 17

Working with Children and Adolescents

In this module, major theoretical views are introduced with an emphasis on relevant evidence-based techniques, skills, and strategies that work well with children and adolescents in both individual and group settings. Common issues in childhood and adolescence will be highlighted with suggested intervention plans. Learners will also be taught how to establish a collaborative relationship with the stakeholders and community to design, manage, and review **evidence-based intervention plans** that better **support children and adolescents**.



Admissions

	Postgraduate Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling	Postgraduate Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling (Wellbeing Interventions)	Postgraduate Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling (Children and Adolescents)
Module Exemption	Learners who have taken modules from other recognised higher institutions may apply for module exemption. The school will review your application and approve it accordingly.		
Course Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures and case studies discussions • Role plays • Practicum supervision 		
Entry Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Bachelor's Degree, or • Graduate Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling from TSPP, or • Postgraduate Diploma in Psychotherapy and Psychological Interventions from TSPP 		
English Language Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade C6 and above in GCE 'O' Level English, or • Grade E and above in any GCE 'A' Level subject conducted in English, or • IELTS 5.5, or • TOEFL (Internet Based) 59 		
Registration Fee	S\$163.50 w/GST		
Tuition Fee	S\$27,086.50 w/GST	S\$32,536.50 w/GST	S\$31,991.50 w/GST
Application Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form • Application statement • 1 recent passport-sized photo • NRIC/Valid SG pass copy • Updated resume • Educational certificates and academic transcripts 		

Get in touch

Please feel free to get in touch with us online or meet us on campus if you are interested in studying at The School of Positive Psychology.

For more information regarding our courses and entry requirements, please contact us using the following details.

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Thrive together.

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