



BRISBANE  
SCHOOL of  
THEOLOGY

IN004 - 812

# Mental Health Issues in Christian Counselling

## Unit Outline

### Semester 1, 2024

#### About this Unit

This unit aims to equip students with Christian counselling and care skills as well as knowledge about how to integrate pre-existing mental health skills into a Christian framework. It will explore the role, scope and benefits of Christian counselling both from the view of pastoral care and professional mental health roles. Whilst this course does not fulfil the professional standards and requirements of Australian Counselling membership, it will prepare students to interact within the scope of their role with the mental health sector with a Christian worldview. It will also better equip those serving in Church contexts to navigate the care of those facing mental health challenges in their midst. Students will enjoy the practical nature of the unit. Skills and knowledge for understanding mental health issues and Christian responses will be taught and practiced each week. Students will leave this unit with greater clarity of the nature, scope and benefit of their role, how to interact with the wider team of care in the field, resources and strategies to integrate into their current role from a Christian perspective and a framework from which to build further knowledge and skills in the future.

**Shaped by His Word**  
*Serving His World*

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THIS UNIT

### Important Academic Information

Please be aware of the requirements and policies about [lecture attendance, study load, late submission of assignments, passing this unit, and plagiarism.](#)

### Teaching Staff Contacts

Lecturer	Dr John Warlow <i>M.B. Ch B. F.R.A.N.Z.C.P.</i>	Karen Nivala <i>BSpPath Hons; MDiv</i>
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### Additional Information

Start Date	05/02/2024	End Date	07/06/2024
Credit Points	12	Census Date	15/03/2024
Co / Pre-Requisites	N/A		
Contact Hours	39	Non-contact hours	Approx. 7 per week
Moderation	This unit is at times moderated by the ACT. See <a href="#">ACT Moderation Policy</a> for more info.		

### Assessment Summary

Assessment Item	Due Date	Weighting
Online Quizzes for Skills Development (2% each)	Weeks 2-11	20%
Two Take Home Exams – Case Scenarios (25% each)	Study week 1 Study week 2	50%
Skills Evaluation Session (Graded) and Submission of Practice Portfolio (Pass/Fail) – Over Zoom	Exam Week	30%

### Unit Learning Outcomes and Content

See the ACT website for unit learning outcomes and content:

<https://www.acttheology.edu.au/unit/IN004-812/>

## UNIT TIMETABLE

Week	Date	Topic	Quizzes & Exams
1	Feb 05	The Person of the Counsellor/Carer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope of the role of Christian counselling in the mental health care sector</li> <li>• Cultivating Reflective Practice</li> <li>• Supervision from a Christian perspective</li> </ul>	
2	Feb 12	Counselling Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to a practical framework</li> <li>• The Skills of Connection from a Christian Perspective</li> <li>• Professional conduct</li> </ul>	Quiz 1 due
3	Feb 19	Counselling Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding suffering and flourishing in faith and practice</li> <li>• Understanding the whole person in faith and practice part 1</li> </ul>	Quiz 2 due
4	Feb 26	Counselling Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the whole person in faith and practice part 2</li> <li>• Introduction to Formulation</li> </ul>	Quiz 3 due
	Mar 04	Camp Week – NO CLASS	
5	Mar 11	Understanding Mental Health as a Christian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the DSM-5 from a Christian perspective</li> <li>• Understanding depression and anxiety</li> <li>• Understanding drug and alcohol addiction</li> </ul>	Quiz 4 due
6	Mar 18	Understanding Mental Health as a Christian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding PTSD</li> <li>• Understanding Suicide</li> <li>• Other diagnoses</li> </ul>	Quiz 5 due
7	Mar 25	Engaging Help as a Christian Counsellor/Carer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the mental health sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Medication</li> <li>○ National standards</li> <li>○ Referral</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The role of family and friend</li> <li>• The role of the church</li> </ul>	Quiz 6 due
	Apr 01	Easter week – Study week – NO CLASS - Take Home Exam 1 Due	Exam 1
	Apr 08	Holiday week – NO CLASS	
8	Apr 15	Introducing the Christian Response from the Pyramid Christian Counselling and Care Responses and the Integrated Toolkit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Tools</li> <li>• Physical Tools</li> </ul>	Quiz 7
9	Apr 22	Christian Counselling and Care Responses and the Integrated Toolkit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mind Based Responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cognitive Behavioural Therapy</li> <li>○ Acceptance and Commitment Therapy</li> <li>○ Mindfulness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Quiz 8
10	Apr 29	Christian Counselling and Care Responses and the Integrated Toolkit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heart Tools</li> <li>• Spiritual Tools</li> </ul>	Quiz 9
	May 06	Labour Day – NO CLASS	Quiz 10
11	May 13	A Christian Approach to Attachment Phenomenology, aetiology and treatment	
12	May 20	A Christian Approach to Trauma Phenomenology, aetiology and treatment	
		Study week - Take Home Exam 2 Due	Exam 2
		Exam week – Evaluation Session	

## ASSESSMENT OUTLINE FOR IN004-812

This applies to students who are enrolled at Masters level

Assessment 1	Item	<b>Online Quizzes for Skills Development</b>
	Details	<p>10 2% quizzes targeting specific skills development over the course. Questions will require students to demonstrate advanced understanding in case scenarios, ethical decisions and may require a critical response to a specific reading through the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling skills</li> <li>• Understanding Mental Health</li> <li>• Roles and referral</li> <li>• Christian Counselling and Care Responses</li> </ul>
	Due Date	As per Unit Outline – Following lectures week 1-10
	Weighting	20% (2% each)

Assessment 2	Item	<b>Two Take Home Exams – Case Scenarios</b>
	Details	<p>Students will be provided with a case scenario with a series of short answer question which will require the student to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critically analyse key issues, including the implications for the whole person</li> <li>• Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the scope of the role of the family, church, mental health practitioner, in supporting the person</li> <li>• Critically review treatment/response options within the scope of their role</li> </ul> <p>Answers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evaluate and integrate ethical concerns in their responses</li> <li>○ Evaluated and integrate the biblical worldview in their responses</li> </ul> <p>Students will be given 72 hours to complete the task.</p>
	Due Date	Exam 1 - Study Week 1 – (Opens Apr 01- Ends Apr 08) Exam 2 – Study Week 2 – (Opens May 24 – Ends May 31)
	Weighting	50% (25% each)

Assessment 3	Item	<b>Skills Evaluation Session (Graded) and Submission of Practice Portfolio (Pass/Fail) – Over Zoom</b>
	Details	<p>Students will be provided with a referred case two days prior to evaluation. Co-teacher will role play person presenting with MH concerns. 10 minutes of interacting with 'client' will be evaluated for foundational counselling skills.</p> <p>10 minutes of discussion with facilitator (vive voce style) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of key issues and needs</li> <li>• Appropriate response options including referral</li> </ul> <p>Reflective Skills Development Portfolio to be submitted for the course (Pass/Fail):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of skills practice</li> <li>• Reflection and learning goals</li> </ul>
	Due Date	Exam week
	Weighting	30%

# UNIT BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Prescribed Texts

\* Warlow, J., *The Cure for Life: Part 1 – God Centred Transformation* (Gold Coast: Ocean Reeve, 2017).

\* Warlow, J., *The Cure for Life: Part 2 – God Centred Relationships* (Gold Coast: Ocean Reeve, 2018).

\* Books marked with an asterisk are on the Frozen Shelf in the library.

## Recommended Reading

Emlet, M. R., *Descriptions and Prescriptions: A Biblical Perspective on Psychiatric Diagnoses & Medications*. Greensboro: New Growth Press, 2017.

Clinebell, H., *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth*. 3rd ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011.

Clinton, T. E., A. D. Hart, and G. W. Ohlschlager, (eds.) *Caring for People God's Way: Personal and Emotional Issues, Addictions, Grief, and Trauma*. Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2005.

Collins, G., *Christian Coaching*. 2nd ed. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2014.

Collins, G., *Christian Counselling: A Comprehensive Guide*. 3rd ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007.

Grcevich, S., *Mental Health and the Church: A Ministry Handbook for Including Children and Adults with ADHD, Anxiety, Mood Disorders, and Other Common Mental Health Conditions*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.

Greene-McCreight, K., *Darkness is My Only Companion: A Christian Response to Mental Illness*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2015.

Johnson, E. *God and Soul Care*. Grand Rapids: IVP, 2017.

Knabb, J. J. *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Christian Clients: A Faith-Based Workbook*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Kutter, C. and W. Whitney, *Theology for Psychology and Counseling: An Invitation to Holistic Christian Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022.

McMinn, M., *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling*. Rev ed. Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2012.

McRay, B.W., M.A. Yarhouse & R.E. Butman, *Modern Psychopathologies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016.

Myers, D. G., T. Hall, D., Powlison, and J. Coe, *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 2010.

Nesbit Sbanotto, E. A., H. D. Gingrich and F. C. Gingrich, *Skills for Effective Counseling: A Faith-Based Integration*. Grand Rapids: IVP, 2016.

Nikles, D. and S. *Cycles of Transformation*. 2nd ed. Brisbane: Dawen, 2010.

Petersen, B. L. *Foundations of Pastoral Care*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2007.

Scalise, E. T., and S-Y Tan, *Lay Counseling, Revised and Updated: Equipping Christians for a Helping Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.

Sanders, R. K., (ed.) *Christian Counselling Ethics*. 2nd Ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013.

Stanford, M. S., *Grace for the Afflicted: A Clinical and Biblical Perspective on Mental Illness* 2nd ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 2017.

Swinton, J., *Resurrecting the Person: Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000.

Tan, S-Y, *Counselling and Psychotherapy: A Christian Perspective*. Baker: Grand Rapids, 2014.

Thomas, A., *Tackling Mental Illness Together: A Biblical & Practical Approach*. London: IVP, 2017.

Thompson, K., *Christ Centred Mindfulness*. Sydney: Morning Star, 2019.

van Deusen Hunsinger, D., *Bearing the Unbearable: Trauma, Gospel, and Pastoral Care*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.

Warlow, J. & P. Stebbins, *Wholly Coping*. Paddington: ChristianWholeness, 2004.

Watson, T. S., *Developing Clinicians of Character: A Christian Integrative Approach to Clinical Supervision*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2018.

Wilder, J. J. G. Friesen, A. Bierling, R. Koepcke and M. Poole. *The Life Model: Living From the Heart Jesus Gave You*. Shepherd's House, 2004

## GRADUATE OUTCOMES FOR THIS UNIT

See [BST Graduate Attributes](#) in the Student Handbook on Moodle.

Attribute	Emphases of Unit			Comment
	Strong	Moderate	Light	
Passionate discipleship			✓	Mental Health Issues in Christian counselling is for believers who are passionate about applying their faith in the context of a roles in pastoral care and counselling. The content will be aimed at equipping students to be representatives of God's love for those who are facing mental health challenges.
Sound knowledge of Bible			✓	This unit is offered with conjunction with two more theologically oriented courses, Theological Perspectives on Mental Health and Theological Approaches to Wellbeing. This course will focus more on the practical application of this knowledge and will provide students with a Christian perspective of utilising and applying care and counselling skills.
Humility and faithfulness	✓			Mental Health Issues in Christian counselling will require students to take a disciplined approach to skill development. Content on self-care is aimed at cultivating a student's faithfulness to God as they serve and love others.
Communicating the Gospel		✓		This unit will assist students with a variety of tools which equip students to articulate the gospel, particularly for the sake of those who are struggling with Mental Health challenges.
Commitment to mission		✓		Mental health challenges are increasingly prevalent in society. This unit aims to equip students with the practical skills to minister to those in the community who are suffering or caring for this group.
Commitment to team ministry		✓		This unit will emphasise the role of the whole community in supporting those who are suffering. It will also aim to equip people within their vocational contexts, whether it be a secular profession or ministry. There will be an emphasis on the role of the church in wise communal care.
Basic ministry skills	✓			This unit aims at cultivating the skills of co-travelling with those who are struggling with mental health issues. The course emphasises theologically sound, ethical and reflective practice.
Commitment to lifelong learning	✓			This unit is aimed at providing the framework for skill development in the present as well as providing discernment for future skills development. Reflective tasks will require students to discern their current learning needs and work towards goals. The significance of ongoing supervision and professional learning will be emphasised.





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