

# PCPA Diploma course information brochure

The Personal Construct Psychology Association offers two courses at diploma level:

the 3-year **Diploma in Personal Construct Psychology**, and  
the 4-year **Diploma in PCP Psychotherapy** accredited by the UK Council for Psychotherapy

Diploma courses are run in west London. The course is structured in 2-day units run in a 'carousel' format – a rolling programme of modules - which allows a number of potential starting points each year.

Training is designed for small groups of 6-12 students. Given its innovative structure, the group will usually be composed of students at different stages of training, and students in psychotherapy will work alongside those working in other contexts such as education or organisational consulting. This highlights the wide applicability of our core theory, and results in a diverse, stimulating and challenging learning environment.

Lecturing is kept to a minimum and students take primary responsibility for managing their own learning. This learning paradigm is itself a stimulating and enjoyable application of personal construct psychology to the learning process.

## **Course attendance**

The Diploma Course consists of nine 2-day units per year, for 3 years. This represents 54 days of face-to face tuition broken down into six 'core units' and three 'supplementary units'.

Students working towards the Diploma in Psychotherapy study for a further fourth year, including six 1-day workshops and a residential weekend.

## Course syllabus

<p><b>Constructive alternativism</b> Philosophical basis of PCP Constructivist perspectives Social constructionism Cultural considerations</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i> <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> <i>Kelly vol 1 ch 1</i> <i>Burr, Social Constructionism</i> <i>Paris &amp; Epting, 2004, Social &amp; Personal Construction ( from Raskin 2)</i> <i>Raskin et al, 2005, PCP meets constructivism (in Winter/Viney)</i></p>	<p><b>Constructs of transition</b> Constructs of transition Cycles of experience 'Resistance to change' Skills practice/role play</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i> <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> <i>Kelly vol 1 ch 10 Vol 2 Ch 17</i></p>	<p><b>Elaborating the construct system</b> Skills practice/role play Creativity and innovation Risk assessment Strategy and case-planning</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i> <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> <i>Kelly vol 2 Ch 19</i> <i>Fransella, 2003, Skills &amp; Tools</i> <i>Denicolo</i> <i>Winter, 1992, Techniques for the Assessment of Construing, (Winter)</i></p>
<p><b>Basic theory</b> Fundamental postulate Corollaries Contrast with other theories Skills practice/role play</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i> <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> <i>Kelly vol 1 ch 2</i></p>	<p><b>Psychotherapeutic approach</b> <b>Ethical and Professional Issues</b> Ethics and codes of practice Therapists' dilemmas Power, authority, morality, culture</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i> <i>Professional Issues</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> <i>Kelly vol 2 ch 12</i> <i>Leitner et al, 2005, Encountering Another (from Winter/Viney)</i> <i>Dryden, Therapists Dilemmas</i> <i>Journal of Constructivist Psychology</i> <i>Special edition on ethics 2005</i></p>	<p><b>Loosening &amp; tightening construing</b> Purpose &amp; direction in practice Facilitating cycles of movement Facilitation skills Relationship with clinical diagnosis</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i> <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> <i>Kelly vol 2 Ch 20</i></p>
<p><b>Supplementary unit</b> Additional or refresher topics chosen by the student group Contemporary applications of PCP Other psychological approaches Issues of current concern or interest</p>	<p><b>Supplementary unit</b> Additional or refresher topics chosen by the student group Contemporary applications of PCP Other psychological approaches Issues of current concern or interest</p>	<p><b>Supplementary unit</b> Additional or refresher topics chosen by the student group Contemporary applications of PCP Other psychological approaches Issues of current concern or interest</p>

<p><b>The Clinical Setting</b>  Basics of PCP practice  Caseload management  Contrast with other models  Skills practice/role play</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i>  <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i>  <i>Kelly vol 1 ch 4</i>  <i>Winter, 1992, PCP in Clinical Practice</i></p>	<p><b>Appraisal of experience &amp; activity</b>  Interviewing protocol  Approaching the case history  Clients in the social context  Skills practice/role play</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i>  <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i>  <i>Kelly vol 2 Ch 13 &amp; 14</i></p>	<p><b>Facilitating Psychological Movement</b>  Difficulties in change &amp; transition  Types of therapeutic movement  Limitations &amp; onward referral  Skills practice/role play</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i>  <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i>  <i>Kelly vol 2 Ch 21</i>  <i>Epting et al, 2003, An audacious adventure – PCP therapy (from Fransella)</i>  <i>Winter, 1992, Explorations in therapy and reconstruction (Winter)</i></p>
<p><b>The Repertory Grid</b>  Design of repertory grids  Grid analysis  Skills practice</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i>  <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i>  <i>Kelly vol 1 ch 5</i>  <i>Jankowitz, Easy Guide to Rep Grids</i>  <i>Bannister &amp; Fransella, Manual for Rep Grid Technique</i></p>	<p><b>Difficulties in Construction</b>  Presenting problems  PCP and 'stuckness'  Change and reconstruction  Social/cultural aspects</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i>  <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i>  <i>Kelly vol 2 Ch 16 &amp; 17</i>  <i>Fransella, 2003, From Theory to research to Change (from Fransella)</i></p>	<p><b>Diagnosis and the Evidence Base</b>  Hypothesis formulation  Disputed assessments  Research methods  Arguments against therapy</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i>  <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i>  <i>Kelly vol 2 Ch 15 Vol 1 Ch 9</i>  <i>Winter/Viney, 2005, Part 3 The evidence base</i></p>
<p><b>Supplementary unit</b>  Additional or refresher topics chosen by the student group  Contemporary applications of PCP  Other psychological approaches  Issues of current concern or interest</p>	<p><b>Supplementary unit</b>  Additional or refresher topics chosen by the student group  Contemporary applications of PCP  Other psychological approaches  Issues of current concern or interest</p>	<p><b>Supplementary unit</b>  Additional or refresher topics chosen by the student group  Contemporary applications of PCP  Other psychological approaches  Issues of current concern or interest</p>
<p><b>Self-characterisation &amp; fixed role</b>  Practical &amp; theoretical issues  Contemporary applications  Experimentation and change</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i>  <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i>  <i>Kelly vol 1 ch 7 &amp; 8</i></p>	<p><b>Elaborating the Complaint</b>  Psychotherapeutic procedure  Skills practice/role play  Ethical and cultural issues</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i>  <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i>  <i>Kelly Vol2 Ch 18</i></p>	<p><b>Role of the therapist</b>  Role of therapist/facilitator  Sociality and role relationships  Managing client relationships  Contracting issues</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i>  <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i>  <i>Kelly Vol 2 Ch 11</i>  <i>The Psychotherapeutic Relationship, 2005, Chiari, Nuzzo, (from Winter/Viney</i>  <i>Leitner &amp; Guthrie, 1992, Aweful, awful nature of role relationships (from European perspectives)</i></p>

<p><b>Dimensions of Diagnosis</b> PCP and transitive diagnosis Constructs of disorder Working within other models</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i> <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> <i>Kelly Vol 1 Ch 9</i> <i>Walker &amp; Winter, 2005,</i> <i>Psychological disorder and reconstruction (from Winter/Viney</i> <i>Leitner &amp; Faidley, Disorder, Diagnosis and Struggles, 2002</i> <i>(from Raskin 2)</i></p>	<p><b>Groupwork, role play, enactment</b> PCP group work Using enactment &amp; role play Skills practice/role play</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i> <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> <i>Kelly Vol 2 Ch 22</i> <i>Kalekin &amp; Walker, 1996,</i> <i>Construction of Group Realities</i></p>	<p><b>Foundations of PCP</b> Constructs and construing Professional constructs Culture and context</p> <p><i>Reflexivity Group</i> <i>Professional Issues Group</i></p> <p><i>Reading</i> <i>Kelly Vol 1 Ch 3</i></p>
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## Core Units

Most units reference a chapter in George Kelly's 2-volume Psychology of Personal Constructs, and the unit will usually start with a review of the chapter which students will have read in preparation. The aim is to share our understandings of the theory, and explore its application in our contemporary lives and work. Exploration and elaboration of the chapter themes is an emergent process, and the tutors' aim is not to 'teach' but rather to join students in their inquiries, and to facilitate the creation of generative questions which challenge and stimulate our construing.

During the unit we work on themes emerging from the chapter through experiential activities, practice sessions and discussions, which are aimed at challenging and deepening our understanding of the theory, our professional practice, and ourselves, and developing our skills as PCP practitioners. Work may be in pairs, threes, or the full group, with tutors as co-inquirers and participants in many of the experiential activities.

At the end of each unit, students determine useful learning experiments for themselves and their practice arising from the issues explored. Suggestions and references for additional reading will be shared.

Core units have two other features: a Reflexivity group, and a Professional Issues group.

**The Reflexivity Group** is an experiential process group with the aim of applying Personal Construct Theory to ourselves, and particularly to our selves-in-the-group. The experience aims to deepen our understanding and active engagement with each other, with the group process, and with the moment-by-moment nature of our own construing.

**The Professional Issues Group** offers a co-consulting space, where students may bring issues and concerns from their professional lives and beyond, for critique and elaboration from a PCP perspective within the group. The aim is to complement personal supervision by engaging as a group on the professional challenges of participants and developing together a PCP-based style of co-working.

## Supplementary units

Supplementary units are designed to be responsive to particular needs and interests of students, and to address topics of contemporary concern in the worlds of psychotherapy and consultancy. The first day will be a participative workshop on a specific topic agreed with the current student group.

The second day links up with the PCPA programme of Continuing Professional Development activity and is an open workshop attended by advanced students and other PCP practitioners. This enables student engagement

with the wider PCP community and with contemporary practice development. The workshops are all participative and experiential in style, and led by a variety of experienced and specialist PCP practitioners.

### **Assessment for the award of PCP Diploma**

In addition to a full attendance record award of a Diploma requires:

Regular supervision with a PCP supervisor throughout the course.

Presentation of essays at assessment points throughout the course.

Presentation of a study of the process of change (usually a case study).

Presentation of 2 final essays or an original piece of work on PCP (usually a research project or dissertation).

Annual presentation of a personal journal.

### **For a Diploma in Psychotherapy, the additional requirements are:**

Supervised work with psychotherapy clients for at least 400 hours over a period of not less than 3 years.

Training therapy for 2 years.

A final fourth year of study, including attendance at six workshops and a residential weekend.

### **Entry requirements**

Students must have completed a foundation course in PCP, and must demonstrate ability to study at post-graduate level.

They are expected to have an existing professional qualification, or exceptionally, to have extensive experience with an appropriate training record.

Where students do not have a first degree in psychology, it is assumed that their previous training has included at least an introduction to psychology, theories of personality and approaches to psychological intervention. In exceptional cases, students may be required to undertake additional training before commencing the Diploma course.

Applicants must have relevant experience in working with people in a responsible, facilitating role and must have access to an appropriate range of clients in their own professional field from the outset of the course. PCPA will not provide clients for students.

### **Selection process**

Applicants submit a full CV, including the names of 2 referees, and attend an interview with the Principal Tutor and another member of the PCPA Board. The interview is designed as a mutual opportunity to explore the applicant's experience and professional goals, to consider their personal qualities and suitability to practice as a personal construct practitioner, and to ensure a full understanding of the course and course requirements.

PCPA believes in equality of opportunity and will actively seek to make the course accessible and affordable to the widest possible range of applicants.

### **For further information**

We are always pleased to receive tentative enquiries, and are happy to offer the opportunity for conversation and exploration of the suitability of the Diploma course for individual students.

Please contact the Diploma Administrator Cathy Sparkes at [cathy@intandem.co.uk](mailto:cathy@intandem.co.uk) or by phoning her on 0208 943 0695.