

ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOTHERAPY AND SPIRITUALITY

Psychotherapy Requirement

*This requirement is for all students in the MPS, MPS-AT, and PMATD programs.
It must commence prior to beginning the Counselling Practicum course (PPSYC5870/5878).*

Purpose

- a) MPS and PMATD students are encouraged to engage in psychotherapy during and after their formal education and clinical training. This requirement of self-awareness and personal development needs to remain open and ongoing, and the co-requisite of 40 hours personal psychotherapy is considered an absolute minimum *during training* in order to provide an opportunity for students to address personal issues as they relate to their professional development as a counsellor or art therapist.
- b) Personal psychotherapy invites students to experience the therapeutic relationship in-depth from the perspective of the client. Individual sessions enable greater awareness of one's own trigger points, vulnerabilities, strengths and potentialities. Being a client in psychotherapy informs the student's understanding of what constitutes an "ethical relationship", including experiencing specific interventions and developing a lived appreciation for the interpersonal dynamics of the therapeutic process.
- c) The psychotherapy requirement presents opportunities for students to increase self-knowledge and awareness of how their particular life experiences, along with their understandings of and responses to these experiences, might impact their work with clients, providing a greater possibility for working creatively and appropriately with clients on areas of mutual difficulty. We are all "wounded healers" (according to Henri Nouwen and others) and we need to attend to healing our own wounds in order to be effective therapists in relating to the wounds of others.

Specifics of the Psychotherapy Requirement

- a) The requirement of forty (40) hours of psychotherapy acknowledges that it is important for psychotherapists to develop both personally and professionally. It is a compulsory co-requisite within the MPS and PMATD programs (that is, no academic credit is awarded but completion is compulsory for graduation).
- b) One's selected therapist needs to have a Master's or Doctoral degree in counselling/psychotherapy and to maintain a professional certification such as Registered Psychologist, Marriage and Family Therapist, Professional Art Therapist, Canadian Certified Counsellor, Registered Clinical Counsellor, etc. When the student has selected a psychotherapist they will present the credentials of their therapist to the Department Chair/ Co-Chair – who **must sign off on the choice prior to the beginning of psychotherapy** in order for hours completed with the therapist to be credited toward fulfilling the co-requisite.
- c) Students are expected to participate in regular ongoing sessions with a therapist in order to fully engage with the challenges of a longer-term therapeutic relationship. If the student works with more than one therapist, a separate Psychotherapy Hours Verification Form needs to be submitted for psychotherapy hours completed with each therapist. Sessions are normally individual but couple/family/group psychotherapy can be engaged in if relevant to optimal personal and/or professional functioning (see "e" below, and Appendix II).
- d) After the therapist signs the Psychotherapy Hours Verification Form, the form is forwarded to the Department Chair/Co-Chair. The Department Chair/ Co-Chair approves the completed Psychotherapy Hours Verification Form and it is placed in the student's program file.
- e) All psychotherapy that is not individual must have the written approval of the Department Chair/Co-Chair (and, of course, consent of other participants in the psychotherapy) in order for hours to count toward fulfilling the co-requisite. If negotiated with and approved by the Department Chair/ Co-Chair, a maximum of 20 hours psychotherapy completed in group/couple/family sessions – either prior to program entry or during program participation – may be counted toward fulfilling the required co-requisite (see Appendix II).
NOTE: A minimum of 20 of the co-requisite hours must be completed as individual psychotherapy.