



GLASGOW ANXIETY & DEPRESSION
COUNSELLING SERVICE

EXISTENTIAL THERAPY AND COUNSELLING

What is Existential Therapy and Counselling?

- Existential Therapy and Counselling focuses on free will, self-determination and the search for meaning and purpose. Therapy and counselling often centres on you rather than on the symptoms you are experiencing. This form of therapy and counselling highlights your capacity to make rational choices and to develop you to your maximum potential.
- This therapeutic approach focuses on concepts that are universally applicable to human existence including death, freedom, responsibility, and the meaning of life. Instead of regarding human experiences such as anxiety, alienation and depression as implying the presence of mental illness, Existential Therapy and Counselling views these experiences as natural stages in a normal process of human development and maturation (Comer, 2016).
- According to Comer, 2016, Existential Therapy and Counselling facilitates the process of development and maturation through a philosophical exploration of your experience while stressing your freedom and responsibility to facilitate a higher degree of meaning and well-being in your life.
- Existential therapists and counsellors seek to avoid restrictive models that categorise or label people. There is no existential personality theory which divides humanity into types or reduces people to part components. Instead, there is a description of the different levels of experience and existence with which people are inevitably confronted.
- The way in which a person is in the world at a particular stage can be charted on this general map of human existence (Binswanger, 1963; Yalom, 1980; van Deurzen, 1984).

- According to van Deurzen (see Sharf, 2015), four basic dimensions of human existence can be identified: the physical, the social, the psychological, and the spiritual.

How Existential Therapy Can Help (Extract from Counselling Directory)

- One of the primary aims of existential therapy is to help people face anxieties of life and to embrace the freedom of choice humans have, taking full responsibility for these choices as they do so. Existential therapists look to help individuals live more authentically and to be less concerned with superficiality. They also encourage clients to take ownership of their lives, to find meaning and to live fully in the present.
- Individuals who are interested in self-examination and who view their concerns as issues of living rather than symptoms of a psychiatric illness are more likely to benefit from this approach. Existential therapy is also well suited to those facing issues of existence, for example, those with a terminal illness, those contemplating suicide, or even those going through a transition in their life (*extract from Counselling Directory*).
- Existential Therapy and Counselling is private and confidential. Confidentiality, cancellations, appointments, working agreements and so will be explained by your therapist at the initial appointment.