



 **PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN
PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**

Professional Profiles

Psychological Professions Network

North East and Yorkshire

Counselling Psychologist

Professional Profile



Dr Farzana Sutcliffe-Khan
Counselling Psychologist

Airedale NHS Foundation Trust

What led you to train as a Counselling Psychologist?

I was attracted to the idea that, Counselling psychology is informed by the scientific approach and draws on established psychological research, in addition to humanistic perspectives. There is an emphasis on the therapeutic relationship and reflective practice. Counselling psychologists do have some overlaps with clinical psychologists but it is important to not blend the two or to confuse counselling with counselling psychology.

I appreciate that, Counselling Psychology Practitioners are registered with a professional body to provide a service. The Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) is the professional body in the UK who set and maintain standards for those registered. The HCPC accredits training courses, enforces ethical practices and appropriate conduct.

Counselling Psychology is an integration of psychological theory and research with therapeutic practice. The practice of counselling psychology requires a high level of self-awareness and competence in relating the skills and knowledge of personal and interpersonal dynamics to the therapeutic context (<https://careers.bps.org.uk/area/counselling>).

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What qualifications/ training did you complete to do this role?

There are two pathways to becoming a counselling psychologist: university doctorates and an independent pursuit through the BPS. The BPS website is a great resource which details relevant information and links to institutions offering the accredited counselling psychology doctorates, as well as the information for those wanting to complete the BPS counselling psychology qualification.

My academic route to become a counselling psychologist included 3 steps. I first gained an undergraduate 1st class degree in a British Psychological Society-accredited course from the University of Bradford. The second stage was working as an assistant psychologist/ psychotherapist. In addition, I gained a Masters in Psychoanalytical Observational Studies with the Northern School of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy and the Tavistock. Finally, at stage three I undertook a three-year, full-time counselling psychology doctorate with the York St John University, all of which are accredited by the BPS and HCPC.

The doctorate is a mix of training and practice and is a not salaried position, so there are associated costs which need to be met by the trainee but it is a rewarding experience.

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What route did you take to this career?

Over the years, I had a diverse experience including being a qualified Nursery Nurse, a volunteer co-ordinator for Barnardo's where my focus was on supporting Young people who were diagnosed with Autism alongside volunteering as a counsellor with Childline(NSPCC) and working as an Assistant Psychotherapist with CAMHS.

Following my undergraduate Degree in Psychology with Counselling, I worked as Childline Supervisor. During my Doctorate when I was training to be a Counselling Psychologist, I also worked with Little Minds Matter: an Infant mental Health service in Bradford.

I currently work as a Counselling Psychologist in the Department of Healthcare/Medical Psychology at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust as a Counselling Psychologist. Alongside my main role, I also support the assessment of neurodevelopment assessments of children including Autism and ADHD at the Child Development Centre.