



# Postgraduate Diploma in Relationship Psychotherapy



[instituteofcouplestherapy.com](http://instituteofcouplestherapy.com)





## About Us

**The Institute of Couples Therapy (ICT)** is dedicated to providing professional training for therapists looking to specialise in relationship therapy.

Founded by **Karen Murphy**, an experienced Couples Therapist and Accredited Supervisor, ICT offers a comprehensive range of programs to meet the diverse needs of therapists at various stages in their careers.

Courses include the **Professional Certificate in Couples Therapy**, a comprehensive learning experience that integrates multiple therapeutic approaches such as Gestalt Therapy, Relational Life Therapy, and Family Systems Therapy.

ICT also provides ongoing CPD training both in person and online in areas specifically related to relationship therapy including affairs, working with same-sex couples, infertility, sexual dysfunction, and difficult presentations. It is currently the only organisation in Ireland providing ongoing professional development for therapists working with couples.

Through its IACP-approved programs, ICT fosters a community of therapists who are equipped to confidently address the complexities of relationship dynamics, helping couples and other intimate relationships navigate challenges and strengthen their connections.



# Postgraduate Diploma in Relationship Psychotherapy

April 2025 - March 2026

## COURSE DURATION

One Year

## PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Karen Murphy MIACP

## DELIVERY FORMAT

Online

## VENUE

**Online:** Zoom

**In-Person:**

Maldron Hotel

South Mall

Cork City

## PARTICIPANT LIMIT

Maximum of 20 participants

## CONTACT EMAIL

[info@instituteofcouplestherapy.com](mailto:info@instituteofcouplestherapy.com)

## INFORMATION EVENING

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025

## Course Overview

The Institute of Couples Therapy is proud to introduce **Ireland's first Postgraduate Diploma in Relationship Therapy**, a year-long programme which meets the currently recommended relationship therapy professional standards criteria.

Using an integrative framework, this unique program equips therapists with advanced skills to work with a **variety of relationship dynamics**—from intimate partnerships to non-monogamous relationships, sibling bonds, and professional partnerships.

Our **comprehensive curriculum** blends Gestalt Therapy, the Developmental Model, Differentiation, Relational Life Therapy, and approaches by thought leaders like Salvador Minuchin and Esther Perel. Through engaging lectures, live demonstrations, video analysis, skill-building exercises, and supervised client hours, therapists will gain hands-on experience and practical tools to navigate complex relationship dynamics.

As an added bonus, students enrolled in this programme will have access to all of our live and recorded CPD webinars for the entire course duration—including a library of past webinars and all upcoming sessions.

This diploma offers a transformative opportunity to deepen your professional practice and become a confident, skilled relationship therapist. Join us and be part of a pioneering program that sets the standard in relationship therapy training in Ireland.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this program, students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of and therapeutic sensitivity to the developmental process of relationships and how this can become impeded.
- Make informed therapeutic judgments and interventions with clients presenting relationship difficulties.
- Recognise and respond to ethical concerns arising in the field of relational psychotherapy.
- Understand healthy sexual functioning as well as sexual dysfunction and its impact on relationships.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and sensitivity to gender, sexual, and relationship diversity, as well as intimate relationships beyond couples.
- Apply skills and creative approaches to create a positive impact on relationship difficulties.
- Acquire a clear understanding of how childhood experiences and trauma impact adult relationship dynamics.
- Understand relationship difficulties from a process lens and how these systems become self-sustaining.

## Overview of Training Approach

The **Postgraduate Diploma in Relationship Therapy** is a formative psychotherapy training focusing on an **integrative approach** to working with couples and other forms of intimate relationships.

All modules of the training will incorporate three aspects:

### • Self-awareness and Reflexivity:

- Use reflexivity to manage one's own emotional well-being, ensuring personal history and emotions are kept separate from the client's to prevent the 'self' of the therapist from adversely affecting the therapeutic relationship.
- Explore and challenge personal beliefs, values, fears, and prejudices to enable client-centered practice.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity to equality and difference.

### • Knowledge:

- Integrate a range of psychotherapeutic concepts in practice with clients.
- Understand and articulate a range of humanistic, relational, and experiential approaches appropriate to relationship practice with clients.
- Apply a safe, ethical, legal, and professional framework in practice.

### • Skills:

- Demonstrate a working knowledge and understanding of the skills required to deliver relationship psychotherapy to individuals, couples, and other types of intimate relationships.
- Manage contracting and boundaries.
- Assess risk effectively.
- Manage and respond appropriately to each partner while maintaining a non-judgmental stance.

# Overview of Modules

## Conceptualising Relationship Dynamics

- Differentiation
- Vulnerability Cycle
- Developmental Processes of Relationships
- Models of Couples Therapy

## Assessing Relationships

- Pre-Therapy Assessment
- Intake Questionnaire
- Paper Exercise
- First Session Assessment

## The Work of the Couples Therapist

- Approaching Early Sessions
- Hostile Couples
- Conflict-Avoidant Couples
- Creative Approaches

## Ethical Considerations

- Abuse
- Harm to Self or Others
- Child Protection
- Mental Health Presentations

## Communication Skills

- What is Communication?
- How Communication Breaks Down
- Initiator/Inquirer Process
- Playful Exercises

## Perinatal Mental Health

- Transition to Parenthood
- Infertility
- Perinatal Mental Health Concerns

## Sex

- Talking About Sex and Understanding Desire
- Common Sexual Dysfunctions
- When to Refer to a Specialised Sex Therapist

## Neurodiversity

- What is Neurodiversity?
- Presentation in Couples Therapy
- Skills for Navigating ND Impact

## Specific Presentations

- Infidelity and Betrayal
- Addiction
- Difficult Presentations
- Loss and Endings in Relationships

## Gender, Sexual, and Relationship Diversity

- Consensual Non-Monogamy
  - Working with Gender-Diverse Individuals
  - Bringing Cultural Sensitivity into the Work
-



## Eligibility Criteria

This programme is open to **therapists who have successfully completed a core psychotherapy or counselling psychology training course** and are accredited with an accrediting body such as **IAHIP, IACP, BACP, PSI**, or equivalent. A minimum of two years of post-qualification work is a prerequisite.

Please note, this programme does not constitute core training for entry into the profession for the purposes of acquiring accreditation as a psychotherapist.

### Applicants should demonstrate:

- Strong interpersonal skills
- Commitment and motivation for personal and professional development
- Knowledge of general counselling and psychotherapy processes
- Interest in the practices of relationship psychotherapy

## Application and Assessment Process

Application forms are available for download at:

[www.instituteofcouplestherapy.com/postgraduate-diploma/](http://www.instituteofcouplestherapy.com/postgraduate-diploma/)

- **Information Evening:** 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025
- **Closing Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- **Interview:** Eligible applicants will be invited to an online interview.
- **Maximum Places:** 20
- **Late Applications:** Accepted after initial interviews if any places remain unfilled.

## Client Contact Hours

Students are required to complete 25 hours working with couples or other forms of intimate relationships by the end of the teaching year (to be arranged by the student). This period can be extended by two months if necessary.

## Supervision

A ratio of one hour of supervision for every five client hours is required. Students are responsible for attending clinical supervision sessions. Supervisors must have specific training and experience in working with couples.

A supervisor's report, evaluating the student's clinical proficiency and development as a relationship therapist, will be required upon completion of the training.

## Assessment Criteria

- End of year case study
- 85% attendance
- 25 hours of Client Contact
- Supervisors Report
- Self-assessment
- Course Director and Faculty Feedback

## Course Cost

### Course Fee is €2,900.

Applicants who are offered a place are required to forward a non-refundable booking deposit of €500 in order to secure their place followed by 10 month instalments of €240.

# Training Dates and Time

All classes start from 10 AM to 5 PM.

27 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 (7pm - 9pm)	Online Launch
4 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	Online
5 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	Online
9 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Online
10 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Online
13 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Online
14 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Online
5 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	Online
6 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	Online
3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2025	Online
4 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	Online
7 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	Online
8 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	Online
5 <sup>th</sup> December 2025	Online
6 <sup>th</sup> December 2025	Online
16 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	Online
17 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	Online
13 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	Online
14 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	Online
6 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Online
7 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Online

## Our Expert Faculty



**KAREN MURPHY** *(She/Her)*  
Course Director, Lecturer

Karen founded the **Institute of Couples Therapy** driven by her passion and dedication to the field of relationship therapy. With over a decade of experience as a psychotherapist and an accredited supervisor, Karen is committed to helping couples find meaningful ways to overcome challenges and reconnect.

She holds a **BA (Hons) in Person-Centred Humanistic Psychotherapy** and has successfully run a private practice for over 10 years. Additionally, Karen has completed **advanced training in EMDR, adolescent psychotherapy, and family constellations**.

She works from a relational, experiential, and exploratory approach with couples strongly influenced by Gestalt principles, the Developmental Model, Relational Life Therapy, David Schnarch's differentiation, and Salvador Minuchin's family therapy.



**BRIAN NANNETTI**  
Lecturer

Brian brings nearly **25 years of experience** as a counsellor and psychotherapist, working across diverse healthcare settings and lecturing in Gestalt and Existential group therapies.

Returning to Ireland from Australia in 2018, Brian continues to pursue his passion for couples therapy, believing that intimate relationships offer unique opportunities for personal growth and healing.

Since 2004, he has been in private practice, supporting individuals and couples through life's complex dynamics.



**REBECCA REDDIN** *(She/Her)*  
Lecturer

Rebecca Reddin is a **Chartered Psychologist, Certified Perinatal Specialist** with Postpartum Support International and the **Founder of the Perinatal Mental Health Institute**. She is passionate about creating in-depth, powerful, and evidence based trainings that explore the complexities of the transition to parenthood; including everything from the expected clunkiness of Matrescence, to the intense impact of Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders on individuals, couples and families and everything in between. Rebecca has provided training and education throughout her career as a Corporate Trainer and Psychology Specialist, having worked with several Fortune 500 companies to provide mental health education to employees and training



to their Managers and Senior Leadership, and now provides specialised training through her own educational institute around perinatal mental health. Rebecca is a board member for the Psychological Society of Ireland's Special Interest Group for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health and holds a Masters of Science in Psychology and Masters of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy. Rebecca has worked in women's mental health since 2010 and has supported couples and individuals through the transition to parenthood in her private practice since 2014.



## **SANDRA CARROLL**

### **Lecturer**

Sandra is an experienced, integrative psychotherapist with a **BA (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy** and is an accredited member of the **Irish Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (IACP)**.

She is also an **accredited EMDR Europe practitioner** and she has received advanced training in various couples therapy models with experts in the field, including the Resnick's model, the developmental model with the Couples Institute, and specific sex therapy training with the Institute of Relational Intimacy.

Sandra's approach integrates person-centred, psychodynamic, and family systems theories, alongside relational and mindfulness-based practices.



## **SILVIA PLAZA** *(They/She/He)*

### **Lecturer**

Silvia is certified as a **General Health Psychologist** in Spain, with extensive training and experience in psychotherapy, and follows the standards of recognised professional bodies in Ireland.

Accredited by the **Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI)**, she specializes in gender and neurodiversity, offering a welcoming, LGBTQIA+ affirming, and neurodiversity-friendly space rooted in transfeminist and inclusive perspectives. Silvia helps clients navigate life's difficulties with a flexible approach that draws from supportive listening, exploring past experiences, mindfulness practices, and practical problem-solving tools. As a queer, neurodivergent therapist, she welcomes clients from diverse communities, including kink and polyamory, promoting social justice and empowerment.



## **ALVINA CASSIDY**

### **Lecturer**

Alvina Cassidy is an **IACP accredited counsellor, psychotherapist, EMDR Europe Accredited Practitioner and mindfulness teacher and mentor**. She began her training in meditation and counselling & psychotherapy in the mid-90s in London.

She worked at Dzogchen Beara Meditation Centre coordinating meditation



and compassion-based courses for health and social care professionals and remains part of the team facilitating retreats.

She delivered mindfulness-based programmes in Cork City to health, social care, education and business organisations. Laterally she coordinated and developed the family programme at Tabor Lodge Addiction Treatment Centre. Currently, she lives on the Beara peninsula and meets with clients face-to-face or online.



**JOYLINE GOZHO** *(She/Her)*  
Lecturer

Dr. Gozho is an Adult Psychotherapist and Relational Therapist registered with the UKCP and NCPS. She has worked as a psychotherapist and academic, teaching on the adult psychotherapy training programme at Birkbeck University of London. Dr. Gozho is passionate about understanding the complexities of intimate relationships, helping couples navigate challenges in their relationships, and facilitating growth through the therapeutic journey. With core training in the psychoanalytic/psychodynamic modality, her approach to couples therapy leans toward the Bader-Pearson developmental model. Her work with couples intersects intercultural and interracial issues, reflecting her client demographic, personal identity, and our increasingly multicultural world.



**LINSEY BLAIR** *(She/Her)*  
Lecturer

Linsey Blair is a psychosexual and relationship therapist with over a decade of clinical experience in both public and private settings. She holds a BA in Psychology and a Postgraduate Certificate in Counselling Psychology, with advanced training from Tavistock Relationships, where she earned a postgraduate diploma and MSc in Psychosexual and Relationship Therapy. Linsey has served as faculty at Tavistock and led psychosexual therapy services at Croydon University Hospital, developing innovative models for sexual dysfunction treatment. Now based in Galway, she manages a team of sex and relationship therapists at the Evidence-Based Therapy Centre while continuing to teach, train, and present research across Ireland and the UK.



**MINH TRAN** *(She/Her)*  
IT and Training Manager

Minh Tran holds a **BA (Hons) in Computing & Digital Media** and brings her expertise in IT, social media management, and graphic design to the Institute of Couples Therapy. As the IT and Training Manager, Minh is the primary point of contact for resolving technical issues and enhancing our digital presence. She ensures that all technical aspects of the training run smoothly, providing support for faculty and participants throughout their learning experience.





## A Note from the Course Director

My fascination with working couples and relationships in therapy started in earnest over a decade ago. I have attended hundreds of hours of training during the years as well as participated in peer groups, consultation, and mentoring programmes. Not to mention the amount of reading, watching, and listening I have done around couples therapy.

Working with relationships has been by far the most challenging and deeply fulfilling work in my life. I like to be honest about the fact that I did not start as a good couples therapist. I used to get stuck, caught in power struggles, lose myself, lose the clients, be frustrated with my clients and they were frustrated with me. It has not been an easy journey. However, my clients have by far been my most influential teachers.

They taught me that I need to meet them where they are at and work from there. They showed me that they responded most positively when they are met relationally with respect, authenticity, and curiosity without judgement. Strong boundaries and leadership have kept the therapy space safe to hold the anger, upset, betrayals, and disappointments that relationships can bring.

Showing up as a client for couples therapy is one of the most brave and vulnerable decisions they can make. I believe passionately that these clients need to be met with professional, experienced, and ethical relationship therapists.

Currently, there is an unprecedented demand for couples therapy. Separations and divorces are rising and the pandemic hit a lot of relationships hard. At the same time, many therapists have an interest and eagerness to work with couples but don't know how best to access professional training in this area. This is what has driven me to set up the [Institute of Couples Therapy](#). People need to be able to access well-trained psychotherapists to support them navigate their relationship difficulties and therapists need to be able to access good quality training and ongoing support in this area.

I am delighted to offer this **Postgraduate Diploma in Relationship Psychotherapy**, the first of its kind in Ireland. I am inviting you to join us in setting the highest standards for Relationship Therapy training in Ireland!

Warm Regards,

*Karen Murphy*



# The Four Cornerstones of the Institute of Couples Therapy







## **Postgraduate Diploma in Relationship Psychotherapy**

[instituteofcouplestherapy.com](http://instituteofcouplestherapy.com)  
[info@instituteofcouplestherapy.com](mailto:info@instituteofcouplestherapy.com)