

Certificate in Biblical Counselling

Student Handbook

The Certificate Course provides a comprehensive theoretical and practical introduction to a biblical counselling approach to ministry. It began in 2012 through a collaboration between Biblical Counselling UK and CCEF (The Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation). Much of the course content is based on CCEF's excellent online courses but with most modules now extensively adapted to the UK context and with the addition of newly created UK modules.

This handbook provides information about:

- Applying and registering for the course
- Course requirements and materials
- Structure of the course

If you have further questions about the course please email: courses@biblicalcounselling.org.uk

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1. How to Apply

Application and registration for the Certificate Course

To apply for a place on the Certificate in Biblical Counselling, complete the online application form from www.biblicalcounselling.org.uk/certificatecourse. Applications usually open in March/April for the coming September.

No formal academic qualifications are required to take the Certificate Course. However, the reading and study requirements of the course are approximately at undergraduate degree level. A reference will be required from the pastor / senior minister of the church you currently attend and students can only be accepted onto the course once a satisfactory pastoral reference has been received.

NOTE: each student taking the course must have their own, individual email account.

Once students have been accepted onto the course and have paid the tuition fee for the first module, we will register them. Two weeks before the beginning of term, students will receive access to Canvas - our password-protected online platform which contains the course materials.

The tuition fee for subsequent modules is due by the registration deadline for each module – usually a month prior to the date students are given course access. Please note that late payment of fees incurs an administration charge, and may result in a student not being registered for that module.

A limited bursary fund is available for students with significant financial need. For details, please see our website – www.biblicalcounselling.org.uk/certificatecourse or contact the course administrator.

Transferring registration and credit between CCEF and Biblical Counselling UK

Those who have studied with CCEF are eligible to enroll in Biblical Counselling UK's Certificate course, and may transfer credit of up to two CCEF courses onto BC UK's Certificate Programme (see section 2, Seminar attendance requirements and exemptions).

Certificate Course students who have achieved a grade of C- or above in *Dynamics of Biblical Change* are eligible to enroll in any courses offered by CCEF's School of Biblical Counseling. However, passes in Certificate Course modules taken after September 2021 do not count towards any of CCEF's Certificates.

Passes in Certificate Course modules achieved before September 2021 are transferable to CCEF's Certificates or to a US Master's level program on payment of an additional fee.

If transfer of credit is important to you, please discuss this with us before enrolling.

A note on accreditation

The course is run on a non-accredited basis. The teaching material is supplied by CCEF and includes a selection of the modules from their Online School of Biblical Counseling. These modules have been

developed by the CCEF faculty over many years and are widely used across the world. The original teaching material developed by CCEF has been adapted for the UK context and a key element of the Certificate Course programme are the fortnightly seminars which provide additional teaching and discussion. These are delivered at local venues across the UK, currently Oak Hill in London, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Bath, Belfast, Sheffield, as well as an Online Seminar option. The seminars, together with the peer counselling and observation classes offered in the five-day Summer Intensive, provide the practical component of the course. Accredited counselling courses, such as those that would be recognised by BACP (The British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists), include extensive requirements for supervised counselling hours and serve a different purpose to that provided by this programme.

Students satisfactorily completing the three certificates will be able to indicate that they have successfully completed a course providing a broad introduction to the theory and practice of biblical counselling.

2. Course Requirements

Seminar attendance requirements and exemptions

To qualify for a certificate, students will be required to complete the modules listed in the course syllabus and gained a grade of C- or above. The Summer Intensive should be taken within three years of completing the Foundations certificate.

Each certificate can be completed over one academic year, but we recognise that some students need the flexibility to complete it over a longer period. For more information, please contact the course administrator.

Students who have already completed any of the modules directly with CCEF may apply for an exemption from that module. Because the practical elements of the course and the opportunities to engage in discussion with other students are all key components of this certificate course, students will normally be granted no more than two exemptions across the three certificates. Students who have already taken more than two of these seven modules with CCEF should contact the course administrator to discuss their situation. All students seeking exemptions will need to have obtained a pass at grade C- or higher in the relevant module.

Attendance at seminars will be recorded. To qualify for a certificate, students are required to achieve an overall attendance record of at least 70% across the modules for that certificate. Students who are granted exemptions are required to achieve an attendance record of 80% of the seminars in the modules they take. Students granted exemptions may choose to enrol to attend the seminars for their exempted module(s), in which case their attendance requirement is 70% across all the modules.

Confidentiality

Students will be required to sign confidentiality agreements relating both to peer counselling sessions and to observation classes.

We recognise that students may wish to write very personally in their response papers for the course modules. Arrangements to protect confidentiality are as follows. Papers uploaded to Canvas can only be accessed by the individual student, the RIs for that module, course tutor(s), and BCUK Course Administration. RIs grade and return papers through the online learning platform. Should – exceptionally - an RI need to download a student’s assignment, they are required to delete it from their computer once grading for that assignment has finished, and document that they have done so. Please note that BCUK retains students’ papers on Canvas after the end of the module for quality monitoring purposes. Students should bear these arrangements in mind as they write and submit response papers.

References

All students will require a satisfactory reference from the pastor / senior minister of the church they currently attend (see section 1, How to Apply: Application and Registration).

Time Requirements

This Certificate course is taught at undergraduate level and includes extensive reading and written assignments. Typically, you will need to allow a minimum of five hours per week *in addition* to the time required to watch lectures and attend seminars.

3. Course Materials

Course Syllabus

Each module has a detailed syllabus with information on assigned readings, lecture schedule, a specific grading rubric, and schedule of assignments. There is also a schedule for each module giving dates of seminars and due dates for assignments. You are expected to read the syllabus thoroughly and take note of dates of seminars and due dates of assignments listed on the course schedule.

Introduction to Canvas

When you receive access to Canvas, our online platform, you will have access to a Student Orientation course giving an overview of the platform and explaining how to access your course materials and submit assignments.

Copyright and Sharing Materials

All materials provided in Canvas are copyrighted. When you register for a module, you agree that you will not duplicate or share the audio, video, and/or printed materials with another person(s), unless that person is also registered for that module.

CCEF have made an exception to this policy to allow students to share up to 10 copies of *Journal of Biblical Counseling (JBC)* articles from the course for use in their personal ministry. Examples of this would include sharing an article with a counselee, spouse, friend or small group. This is strictly limited to *JBC* articles. If you wish to share a *JBC* resource with more than 10 people, you will need to make an application via the [permissions page on the CCEF website](#).

Ordering Required Textbooks

You are responsible for obtaining the required textbooks. The cost of books for each module will vary depending on the number of books required, the source you choose to order from, and shipping costs. Details of the required reading for the module for the next term will be made available to you during the second half of the previous term. Please review this list well before the start of each module to allow sufficient time for ordering books.

Journal of Biblical Counseling articles and Other Required Readings

Required reading from the *Journal of Biblical Counseling (JBC)* or short excerpts of books and articles will be provided to you electronically through your Canvas course. These readings are listed in your course syllabus. Please note that some of the required reading for these courses (e.g., books, articles, etc) exist in alternative formats. If you own this material in a previously published format, you are welcome to use it for the courses.

Some modules may require you to read an excerpt of a book or a short article. These excerpts and articles will be available through your course access on Canvas. A portion of your tuition fee is used for the required copyright fees to distribute these items electronically to you.

4. Assignments

This section provides an overview of preparing for various assignments in the course modules as well as resources available to assist you in improving your writing skills.

General Paper Guidelines

1. Follow the directions: Read the assignment description carefully, and make sure you adhere to both the directions (what the assignment is supposed to encompass) and guidelines (word count/length, name of file, etc).

2. Remember the writing process:
 - a. brainstorm ideas, get thoughts out
 - b. narrow and focus your thoughts in a clear, organised way, so that you are building an argument for your audience
 - c. edit, edit, edit yourself ruthlessly (some ideas are meant for another project or are not essential to be included –and that's ok!)
 - d. the final version is the fruit of your labours (not the labour itself). Related to this, take a step back to see how your paper "flows." Is it logical? Does it naturally progress from one idea to another? It may be helpful to have another person read your paper
3. Proof-read your work: Grammatical errors, misspellings, run-on sentences, sentence fragments and/or punctuation can significantly obscure content. Those types of errors may not be marked on your paper, but will be noticed. A well-written paper (free of typos, spelling mistakes, etc) demonstrates thoughtfulness and attention to detail. It may be a good idea to have another person to read your paper to check for those things—spellcheck does not always catch errors!
4. Don't procrastinate: Papers should not be written at the last minute. Though some papers are more informal than others, it doesn't mean they should be sloppy, slapdash in thinking, or mere stream-of-consciousness. It is evident when assignments are rushed.

Response Papers

Most of the modules require response papers and many of these require a 'response' to things you have read. Obviously we will vary in our ability to produce written assignments. Some students will tend to write more creatively simply because that person is gifted in that way or has more ministry/life experience (and that will often be an A grade paper). Most people submit work that exhibits good honest effort (ie they're honest about their life, they saw something really important in what they read, they wrote a decent paper about it. That will be a B grade paper).

Here are some more detailed guidelines used for grading response papers:

1. Are you getting what is the driving force of this particular reading?
2. Are you personally wrestling with/honestly grappling with the driving force of this particular reading?
 - A good response paper is not merely a review of reading nor is it just your own personal story about your feelings, what happened to you and what the Lord did. It's something really unique that is at the intersection of those two things.
 - Are you going beyond the "just" syndrome? There may be a really wonderful theological truth, like trust the Lord. The "just" syndrome is when you go into great detail about the problem and then posit as the solution "just trust the Lord." It means well and it's the right answer, but it's not grappling. Grappling would involve asking yourself: "How do you do

this?” How does that “just” get translated into a life that’s hard, that’s confusing, that’s difficult - what would that look like?

There should be a balance of both personal application and meaningful interaction with the assigned reading or topic in your papers. If you simply summarise the authors or are abstract – in other words, if your grader doesn’t see anything of you, life-lived, and ministry in what you write – they wonder if you are really learning to apply what you’re learning to your own heart and ministry. But if they see you interacting meaningfully with what you’ve read, they get excited. May it be increasingly true of you what was spoken of Jonathan Edwards: “His theology was all application and his application was all theology.” Edwards learned that from reading the Bible.

Papers/Projects

In most modules, there are lengthier papers and/or projects that force you to explore the concepts presented in each lecture in greater depth. Guidelines for these papers and projects vary according to the faculty’s guidelines and specific module (including word count, format, and instructions). Please see your module syllabus for specific guidelines.

Exams

A number of the modules require students to take timed exams. Below is some general information to remember as you prepare for exams:

1. Exams will be available on Canvas one week before the due date. You may take the exam at any point during that week that is convenient to you.
2. You are under honour not to open the file until you are ready to take the exam. You may not look at the exam and then study the material again. Once you have seen the exam, you must continue and complete it.
3. Opening the file to read the questions in advance is considered a violation of the honour code that you will declare upon completion of the exam.
4. If you cannot take the exam during the assigned time, please contact the course administrator to arrange to take the exam early.
5. Some modules contain study guides for the exams. If available, these will be posted on Canvas.
6. All exams are closed book/notes. Some (but not all) may allow the use of an unmarked Bible. You may NOT use an electronic or online Bible.
7. Pay close attention to the specific instructions included on the exam.

8. Make sure to save periodically while you take the exam so you won't lose any work in the event of a technical problem.
9. Pay close attention to the time allotted for the exam. You will be asked to record your start and end times on the exam.
10. Please note that you are not permitted to distribute or share the exam in any manner. (This includes family members, since they may take the module in the future.)

Improving Your Writing Abilities

The Center for Theological Writing at Westminster Theological Seminary in Glenside, has developed some helpful tools for students to sharpen their writing abilities, which you may find helpful as you tackle your assignments:

<https://www.wts.edu/academic-study/ctw/counseling#overview>

Citations (A Word on Plagiarism)

If you use another person's words (whether exact or paraphrased), ideas, or flow of argument without proper citation in the body of the paper as well as in the bibliography (if applicable), whether you have intended it or not, you have plagiarised. Your course tutor or grader should have no doubts whether or not what he/she is reading is your original thought or the borrowed thoughts of another.

If you are still uncertain, please contact the course administrator or your recitation instructor. Incidents of plagiarism will be taken seriously and could result in you failing the course.

Submitting Your Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted electronically, on Canvas, by 23:55 on the due date specified. Papers, exams and projects will usually be graded within two weeks of the due date. Final assignments (projects, papers and exams) will usually be graded within four weeks of their due dates. We will aim to confirm final grades to you four weeks after the end of the module.

5. Grading and Feedback on Coursework

There are two main reasons for providing grades for your work in the certificate course. The first is to provide some feedback about how you have done. We trust it helps to have a sense of the standard of your work and changes that may happen over time. The second purpose is to provide some measure of accountability. Taking a course for credit challenges you to put in the time and effort needed to produce good quality thinking and work. All of our lives and all our ministry

depends upon growing wisdom. We trust getting grades is one way of helping encourage us toward the effort that is needed for that growth.

Yet grading brings dangers too – it can foster a sense of competitiveness or a fear of failure. So do be praying for godly attitudes. It may help to remember that humility and a willingness to admit ignorance and a desire to grow in knowledge, wisdom, and love (James 1:5; Matt. 5:3) are hallmarks of authentic faith.

In many ways grading is simply a means of helping you maintain the ambitions that led you to register in the first place.

We have outlined some general grading guidelines to give perspective and help students understand the criteria for evaluation. Please refer to your module syllabus for specific guidelines and grading on individual assignments.

Feedback on your work

Recitations Instructors (RIs) have training and experience in biblical counselling. They have taken the modules themselves and are usually involved in counselling in their local church context. They grade papers using guidelines supplied by BCUK.

Students often ask what kind of feedback they can expect on their assignments. This will vary according to the module, the particular assignment, and the individual style of the Recitation Instructor. Typically, response papers will receive very few written comments, while longer papers will receive a bit more feedback. RI's may ask questions to provoke more thought (which they may or may not request that you answer). Generally, your RI will offer one positive comment and two comments on an area that could have strengthened your paper. If there are general patterns contained within a specific assignment, you may receive a module-wide email so that you get a sense of how the entire group of students is learning and growing or needs to be stretched.

Grades and Grading Scheme

Most assignments will be assigned a numerical grade which relates to a letter grade. The module syllabus will provide information on the weight of each assignment towards your final grade. Final grades will be a letter grade.

The table below shows the way that percentage scores relate to letter grades and also shows a rough comparison to the way these scores are applied in UK university honours degrees.

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Grade Letter	Percentage Score	Grade Definition		Degree Class (rough guide for comparison)
A	85% – 100%	Excellent to Outstanding	PASS	First
A-	70%-84%			
B+	66% – 69%	Good to Very Good		Upper Second 2:1
B	63% - 65%			
B-	60%- 62%			
C+	55% – 59%	Satisfactory		Lower Second 2:2
C	50% - 54%			
C-	40% – 49%			
D	35% – 39%	Unsatisfactory	FAIL	FAIL
E	30% - 34%			
F	0 – 29%	Unsatisfactory		

The table below gives details of the basis on which this grading will be applied.

Letter Grade and Grade Summary	A	B	C	D –F
	You added dimensions to your work that went above the required assignment.	You successfully fulfilled the requirements of the assignment.	You missed some important aspects of the assignment.	You did not fulfill some or all of the assignment requirements.
Discussion	Discussion is insightful, thorough, and interesting.	Discussion is interesting.	Discussion is interesting but lacks depth.	Discussion is uninteresting and/or too shallow for the assignment.
Understanding	Demonstrates thorough understanding of the material.	Demonstrates fair understanding of the material.	Demonstrates partial understanding of the material.	Demonstrates lack of understanding.
Application	Applies several key concepts from course resources to personal observations and experiences.	Applies at least one key concept from course resources to personal observations and experiences.	Implies key concepts, but doesn't make clear link to course resources.	Does not apply course concepts.
Grammar, Mechanics, Spelling, & Structure	Clear writing with no grammar or spelling errors.	Clear writing with minimal grammar or spelling errors.	Multiple grammar or spelling errors. Mechanics get in the way of clarity.	Numerous spelling or grammar errors. Difficult to read.

Note: The Counselling Observation module is graded on a pass/fail basis.

6. Extensions and withdrawals

Late/Missing Work

Our goal is to help you to *do* the work, for your sake – so that you profit from the course. Sometimes unexpected circumstances (illness, technical problems, ministry or family crises, etc) make lateness unavoidable. We will work with you to help you to catch up. Don't suffer, procrastinate, struggle, or be confused in silence – please do get in touch with your RI or the course administrator!

The general policy for late work is that papers, exams and projects will be marked 10 percentage marks off per day that it is late, and "0" after one week. Exceptions to this policy will be made on a case-by-case basis, to be fair to students who submitted their work on time. If you do not submit an assignment, a grade of "0" will be recorded for that assignment.

Please note: If a mission/camp, holiday or other event in your diary will interfere with you handing in an assignment on time, you are responsible to submit work that is due during the planned absence ***before leaving for*** the event. Please contact the course administrator to be given early access to an exam.

All work is due by 23:55 on the due date.

Extensions

Extensions are granted for unexpected situations (ie ones that you were unable reasonably to anticipate). Extensions will not be granted for a previously scheduled holiday, mission/camp or other planned event.

If you need an extension for up to a week, you should contact your RI. For extensions longer than a week, contact the course administrator – courses@biblicalcounselling.org.uk.

Requesting an extension for up to one week:

If an unexpected situation arises and you feel that you need an extension for a response paper, project or exam, please contact your RI 48 hours before the assignment is due. Requests made after this 48-hour time frame may not be reviewed by your RI before the assignment is due, and late assignments that do not receive a retrospective extension will receive the standard grade deduction (10 points off for every day that it is late, and "0" after a week).

Extension requests for assignments will only be granted for extreme circumstances (illness, ministry or family crises, etc). Your RI can grant you a 48-hour to 1-week extension to submit the paper without a late penalty. If you feel that you are unable to complete the work in the allotted time, you should apply for a longer extension with the course administrator (see below).

Requesting an extension longer than a week:

If you feel that you cannot complete an assignment within the week granted by your RI, you can apply for a longer extension request from the course administrator. These extension requests are only granted for unexpected and serious circumstances such as a death in the family or a major illness. The RI will be notified when an extension request is received and whether the extension is approved along with the new due date.

To request an extension longer than a week:

Email the course administrator – courses@biblicalcounselling.org.uk before the deadline, stating:

1. The module you are taking, your course venue, and the name of your RI
2. The paper or project for which you are requesting an extension
3. The due date
4. The reason for your extension request.

The Course administrator will respond within two working days of your request and inform your RI.

Withdrawing

If you need to withdraw from a module please contact the **course administrator** as soon as possible.

The refund due to you is calculated from the date you advise the **course administrator**. The refund policy is as follows:

Date of withdrawal	Refund due
Before the student receives course access	100% refund
After the student receives course access and before the start of week 1 of the course	100% refund less £65
Before the end of week 2 of the course	100% refund less £115
Before the end of week 5 of the course	50% refund
After the end of week 5 of the course	No refund is payable

7. Student Conduct

Equality and diversity policy

It is important to us that our ministry is free from discrimination. This means that we treat all people with courtesy and respect, involve and listen to others and show consideration and empathy for their well-being.

We value others for their contribution irrespective of personal differences and seek to foster a positive learning environment for our Certificate Course students.

We expect Certificate Course Tutors and RIs and our administration staff to have respect for everyone with whom they come into contact. As those with responsibilities for students, they have a particular responsibility to ensure that each of them is respected.

We expect students to contribute to and uphold our ethos in the way they speak and act towards others. We will not tolerate abuse or discrimination.

We expect everyone to:

- Co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity
- Report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices witnessed or experienced
- Not induce or attempt to induce others to practise discrimination
- Not treat anyone less favourably as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination (“victimisation”)
- Not subject others to harassment

Please raise any concerns about discrimination by a Tutor or RI or by course administration by contacting the Senior Administrator at info@biblicalcounselling.org.uk.

Please raise any concerns about student conduct with your Tutor or RI.

A copy of our Equality and Diversity Policy is available on request from info@biblicalcounselling.org.uk

General Code of Conduct

In every area of ministry, Biblical Counselling UK is committed to maintaining the highest possible Biblical standards of integrity and accountability. Our General Code of Conduct describes the behaviour expected by those giving and receiving training organised by Biblical Counselling UK.

Those involved in the activities of Biblical Counselling UK are expected to:

- Relate to others with graciousness, humility, love, gentleness and respect
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect, paying attention not only to language but attitude and body language

- Act with fairness and treat each person equitably, avoiding discrimination or favouritism
- Never scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group or allow others to do so
- Speak up about inappropriate attitudes and behaviour that might be harmful to others
- Never use drugs except for medical reasons under appropriate supervision
- Obtain consent before taking photographs/video of anyone
- Never use sexually provocative words or gestures, or any forms of physical punishment
- Operate within the principles, procedures and guidelines of Biblical Counselling UK's Safeguarding policy

Please raise any concerns about your RI or Tutor conduct by contacting the Senior Administrator at info@biblicalcounselling.org.uk.

Please raise any concerns about student conduct with your Tutor or RI.

Alternatively, please see the contact details for making a complaint, raising a safeguarding concern and whistleblowing at biblicalcounselling.org.uk/safeguarding/

A full copy of our General Code of Conduct is available on request from info@biblicalcounselling.org.uk

Safeguarding

We consider it important that students are familiar with some basic principles surrounding safeguarding, including the key principle that any ministry in connection with your local church must be undertaken in line with your own church's safeguarding policy.

Therefore, at the commencement of each module, students are required to confirm that they know the identity of their church's safeguarding officer, and that they are familiar with their church's safeguarding policy.

An introduction to Safeguarding ([video](#) and [information sheet](#)) is provided in *Dynamics of Biblical Change* and further training is provided in any modules where students are required to be conducting intentional conversations with individuals (for example *Helping Relationships* and the *Summer Intensive*).

A copy of our full Safeguarding Policy is available on request from info@biblicalcounselling.org.uk

8. The goals of the course

What the course is and isn't

One of the questions we are often asked concerns the way the course equips people for ministry. It may help to start with some negatives:

- This course is not a means to any kind of accredited counselling qualification.
- People who complete the Certificate Course do not become ‘qualified biblical counsellors’.
- Taking the course is not a basis for claiming any authority or expertise to provide other people with advice or counselling.

So what does the course provide? Here are some of the positives:

- The course seeks to deepen our own knowledge and love of Christ
- The course helps us see how God, by the work of his Word and Spirit, brings about change and growth
- The course shows us how God works in his church and uses the gifts of his people to care for those facing struggles in daily life

All of us have opportunities for conversation with our friends and family and fellow church members. In those conversations we want to be loving and caring friends who listen well and pray well as we seek to serve Christ’s kingdom.

We hope and trust that the certificate course will help us with that. It won’t instantly turn us into super-wise experts and taking the course mustn’t be the basis for claiming a skill we don’t have or an authority we haven’t been given.

Many students who have completed courses with Biblical Counselling UK have discovered how these courses have enhanced their skills for ministry. They have become better friends, better parents, better small group leaders, better youth workers and better witnesses to Christ. Many have gone on to exercise important ministry roles in their churches. But such ministry roles must always be exercised under the authority and oversight of local church leaders and not be something we do independently of church or of the safeguarding structures that church provides.

Describing Your Certificate

Many students who have completed the Certificate Course are active in lay counselling ministries in their local church. If they wish to describe their qualification to others, we suggest the following: *Jane Smith has completed all three certificates in the Certificate in Biblical Counselling programme offered by Biblical Counselling UK. This course has involved study in the following areas: a biblical view of personal change and human personality; developing effective helping relationships for individuals and couples; developing caring ministries within the local church; and understanding the unique contribution of the Christian faith to the task of pastoral counselling.*

Accreditation

This training is primarily focused on training pastors and lay people for service in biblical counselling ministries in churches and para-church ministries. It is not designed to prepare students for accreditation with a professional body such as BACP (the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy).

For more information about any of the topics covered in this handbook, please contact the course administrator at courses@biblicalcounselling.org.uk

9. Appendix A

***Dynamics of Biblical Change for Leaders* Students – Transferring to the Certificate Course**

DBC for Leaders students are welcome to transfer to the Certificate Course. They can choose either to attend the Certificate Course seminars for *Dynamics of Biblical Change* (for a small additional fee) or join the Certificate Course with *Helping Relationships*. For more information, please contact courses@biblicalcounselling.org.uk.
