

EXTENDED LIST OF QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

The following topics for reflection and discussion, offer questions that are intended to facilitate further personal consideration of themes and issues addressed within each chapter. These questions can be used in a variety of ways, including private reflection or writing in a learning journal. It is particularly valuable, where possible, to explore topics with a small group of learning partners – such dialogues have the potential to open up different perspectives around a question, thus contributing to a more comprehensive understanding and constructive questioning of one's own assumptions.

Tutors and educators may find it valuable to use or adapt these questions as essay and seminar topics.

CHAPTER 2: What it's like to be a therapist

1. This chapter lists several biographies and autobiographies of therapists. From your reading of these book and articles - or other similar sources – can you identify an image of the kind of therapist you would like to be? Or the ideal therapist you would like to have as a client?
2. A capacity to appreciate the role of therapy as a force for social justice, equality and anti-racism, is an increasingly important aspect of being a therapist. How ready are you for this dimension of therapeutic work? You can find a range of first-hand accounts of how therapists have learned to incorporate such issues in their practice, in: Zahid, N. and Cooke, R. (eds.) (2023) *Therapists Challenging Racism and Oppression: The Unheard Voices*. Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books. Choose one chapter that seems particularly relevant for you. What can you learn from it, that might inform your own work with clientes, and the trajectory of your further learning and training?
3. The present chapter outlines many ways that therapists strive to create a space in which clients can learn and change. Reflecting on your experience as a client of therapy, how many of these things were you aware of at the time? Which of them seemed most important to you? Was there anything missing that would have made a difference to you?
4. In your role as a therapist, does this chapter enable you to identify your strengths and gifts – the principles, skills, and interventions around which you have a great deal of competence, confidence, and resourcefulness? Does it also help you to identify any areas for further development?
5. If you are at an early stage in your career as a counsellor or psychotherapist, what are the priorities looking ahead, in terms of your personal and professional learning and development?

6. What are the person values that drive and motivate your commitment to be a therapist? The answers given to that question, by a set of experienced and eminent therapists, are analysed in: Hannigan, B., van Wanrooij, T., Gaffney, M., & Quigley, J. (2023). Personal and relational ideologies of master therapists. *European Journal for Qualitative Research in Psychotherapy*, 13. In what ways do their stories help you to develop a clearer sense of your own identity as a therapist?
7. How do your own personal life issues and challenges influence who you are as a therapist? Give yourself time to reflect and make notes on specific examples of: (a) how coming to terms with personal issues has contributed to being a better therapist; (b) how unresolved personal issues have reduced your capacity to engage with clients. Following this reflection time, read: Adams, M. (2024) *The Myth of the Untroubled Therapist Private Life, Professional Practice* (2nd edn. Routledge). What are the implications of what has emerged from this exercise, for your training, personal development work, supervision, and career choices?