



# Birkbeck Counselling Association

The Birkbeck Counselling Association is the professional body of the Birkbeck College trainings in Psychodynamic Counselling.

**About BCA.** The Birkbeck Counselling Association is now nearly 28 years old and was formed out of a desire to secure professional links between Birkbeck trained counsellors working in a wide variety of settings. The Association offers membership of a central directory and scheduled events in the form of a monthly members presentation and discussion forum, together with other events such as the Annual Summer Conference. This provides an opportunity for the Association to contribute to the development of psychodynamic and psychoanalytic perspectives around issues of particular importance to counsellors of all theoretical orientations.

**The History.** The first training course was a two-year diploma in student counselling. By the middle of the 1980s a companion diploma in adult counselling was added. A second adult diploma, focussing on organisational dynamics, was soon added forming a total of three diploma level counselling trainings run simultaneously. Upon completion of the diploma graduates could undertake an advanced year of counselling practice. In 1995 the counselling diplomas and the independent third year were redeveloped into a single multi-stranded MSc level training. In 2001, a second MSc, Psychodynamic Counselling with Children and Adolescents, was started.

**Our Ethos.** From its inception the Birkbeck trainings have embodied a particular ethos. Together with the application of psychoanalytic theory to the practice of counselling, Birkbeck trainings emphasise the importance of working with and within the institutional setting. Thus, Tavistock human and group relations theory together with psychoanalysis form twin theoretical foundations for the trainings.

**Our Members.** Our commitment to a deeper understanding of institutional dynamics is reflected in our membership. While most of our members work in counselling roles, either within institutional settings or in private practice, a number of our members have continued in their professions of origin and thereby seek to bring a psychoanalytic orientation to work settings encompassing religious, social work, nursing, fields, across education, to fields such as the law and commerce.