LIVE ONLINE – 30 hours

EXPRESSIVE THERAPIES TRAINING

February to April 2027

Certificate in Therapeutic Writing

Creative Counselling with Adult & Adolescent Clients

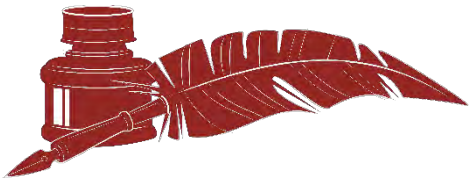
1hr Introduction; 6 x 3-hour online training modules; 12 hours home study = 30 hours

Trainers and course creators: Dr Mark Pearson and Dr Helen Wilson

Co-Directors of Expressive Therapies Australia

COMPONENTS OF THE COURSE

- Free 1-hour online orientation to the course and course requirements
- 6 x 3-hour online interactive training modules (17 hours, includes 10-minute break)
- 12 hours of home study and assignment preparation
- 1 written assignment (1,500 words, optional)
- A Training Manual is provided for each module
- eBook of Readings provided



COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will be of benefit to those who conduct therapy with adult and adolescent clients, individually and in groups. Therapeutic writing helps clients know themselves, and write their way to wellbeing. Participation in the training does not require any previous experience - or specific skills - with creative or therapeutic writing. It brings together a range of current literature on the theory, evidence-base, principles and practice of writing for therapeutic purposes. Among its unique features are our own dynamic Expressive Therapies activities developed and tested over the last 36 years.

Therapeutic writing within counselling incorporates reflection, followed by expressing cognitive, emotional, somatic and transpersonal experiences. This supports psychological, emotional resolution, and contributes to physical wellbeing, motivation and psychological clarity.

The course provides opportunities for exploring a wide range of practical therapeutic activities for engaging adult and adolescent clients. Therapeutic writing is an expressive therapy that can be combined with the use of art, music and movement, and be safely incorporated into both face-to-face and telehealth counselling.

2027 Intake Dates and Times:

Free Introductory Orientation: Monday 8 February 5.30pm – 6.30pm (Brisbane Time)

Six online training modules: Mondays 5.30pm to 8.30pm (Brisbane Time), with a 10 minute break

1: 1 March **2:** 8 March **3:** 15 March **4:** 22 March (one-week break) **5:** 5 April **6:** 12 April

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Create and present therapeutic writing activities to support client goals and benefit wellbeing
- Apply autobiography planning to examine and identify therapeutically relevant stages of life
- Generate reflective writing prompts for enhancing client self-awareness and communication
- Demonstrate ability to engage clients in the use of metaphor as a way to explore and enhance self-understanding.

COURSE PLAN	
1 hour 8/2/27	**Introductory Orientation**: This free online session reviews course content, course requirements, online etiquette and your time commitment. Available prior to registration.
Live Online Modules	***Topics and Learning Activities***
1 3 hrs 1/3/27	**Aims, Methods and Applications of Therapeutic Writing** • Background and evidence-base for therapeutic writing • Writing for wellbeing; Writing activities and integrative counselling • Using self-discovery worksheet formats • Writing for self-compassion; Challenging self-criticism
2 3 hrs 8/3/27	**Guided and Spontaneous Reflective Writing with Imagery** • Journal writing activities for cognitive clarity and emotional expression • The power of symbol and metaphor in therapy • Metaphor: help to view life a new way • Guided reflection with sentence prompts
3 3 hrs 15/3/27	**Poetic Expression, Self-Kindness and Inspiration from Literature** • Writing for Self-kindness • Poetry for self-expression: Exploring possibilities and potential • A taste of bibliotherapy: Drawing inspiration from others
4 3 hrs 22/3/27	**About My Life** • Imagination and writing for clarity and calm problem-solving • Process writing to express frustrations • Writing and memoir: Brief autobiographical review as therapy
Two weeks break for home study and assignment preparation	
5 3 hrs	**Who Am I? Who are We?** • Exploring identity and self

5/4/27	• Positive Writing • Professionals' use of a self-reflection diary
6 3 hrs 12/4/27	**Letting go Limitations, Opening to Inspiration and Personal Quest** • Imagery as a catalyst for written self-reflections • Reflective writing to support a quest • Harnessing mental imagery and active imagination for future focus

Assignment

1,500 words Due by Module 5 or 6. *Optional, but required for award of certificate.*

Create two original therapeutic writing activities for use with an individual client who is dealing with feelings of lethargy, depression or anxiety. The activities will include client self-reflection and ways of symbolically reporting emotional states. Write a short rationale for how, when and why the activities could be used. Include articulation of the aims, the appropriate client age range, resources needed, and what potential benefit a client could anticipate. It is recommended that you consult the course resources (Textbook chapters, Module Notes, eBook of Readings), from which you can adapt or blend suggested activities, and/or create an entirely original activity.

Resources provided for you:

- Extracts from: Pearson, M., & Wilson, H. (2009). *Using expressive arts to work with mind, body and emotions. Theory and practice.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
  - Chapter One - Evolution and Practice of Expressive Therapies
  - Chapter Six - Expressive Writing as Emotional First Aid
- Course eBook of Readings – Including research providing an evidence base
- Training manual with activity formats for each module

Resources you will need to provide:

- A quiet, private space to engage with the online training
- Writing paper and pens (Yes! Some old-fashioned materials)
- A process Journal
- Drawing paper and crayons
- Snacks

The course was approved for OPD points by the ACA in 2026 and we anticipate it will be again in 2027

Course Fee:

$795 - payable on completion of registration

Registration and payment via the Expressive Therapies Australia website:
https://expressivetherapies.au/courses/online_all.php

Cancellation Policy:

- Notice of 72 hours or more before the first module: full refund less $50 administration fee
- Notice of at least 48 hours: 50% refund less $50 administration fee
- Notice of 24 hours or less or non-completion of the course: no refund



TRAINER BACKGROUNDS

Helen and Mark are the founders and Directors of Expressive Therapies Australia. Over 34 years ago we started our collaboration, and Expressive Therapies Australia was born. We have been fortunate to have trained thousands of graduates from many parts of the world in the various modalities of our Australian style of Expressive Therapies (ET). While we enjoy in-person training, we have many years of successful teaching online as university lecturers.

Originally based in Brisbane, we moved to live near Fremantle, Western Australia (to work at the University of Notre Dame Australia), and then relocated to Adelaide (to teach counselling for the University of Adelaide). Perhaps the cycle was completed when we returned to Queensland, where we spent six years with the University of the Sunshine Coast. Our home base is now in Moreton Bay on the north side of Brisbane. Our own *Expressive Therapies Australia* programs are now also taught by highly experienced trainers, in Australia as well as in Singapore. While our current focus is training in Australia and Singapore, we travel to present courses wherever there is interest and a desire by professionals to learn about integrating ET into their support for people in distress.

DR. MARK PEARSON Ph.D., M.Ed.(BEM), Dip T., Cert HB & TP, Dip. ERC.

Mark has been conducting courses in Expressive Therapies (ET) around Australia for over thirty-seven years, in Asia since 2001, and occasionally in New Zealand and for many agencies around Australia.

For five years Mark held a senior staff position at a training centre in the Blue Mountains, NSW, as lecturer in Emotional Release Counselling for Children, Breathwork Therapy, Dreamwork and Sandplay. He then directed courses at a personal growth and training centre in Toowoomba for eight years. He has completed further studies in Transpersonal Psychotherapy with Dr Stanislav Grof, and holds a *Diploma of Teaching* (primary), a *Masters in Education*, majoring in Behaviour Management. His PhD research explored links between Multiple Intelligences Theory and the therapeutic alliance in counselling with adult clients. Mark also completed advanced Sandplay Therapy training with Ruth Ammann, a close colleague of Dora Kalff, the founder of Sandplay. He is recognised by the *World Association of Sand Therapy Professionals* as a Consultant Trainer.

Mark lectured in counselling at the University of Notre Dame, Australia, in Fremantle for five years, then lectured at the University of Adelaide, then was a Senior Lecturer in Counselling at the University of the Sunshine Coast for seven years, where he also founded the *USC Counselling & Wellbeing Clinic.* Mark also provides post-graduate counselling training for *ACAP University College.* His publications can be found at: https://expressivetherapies.au/publications.php

Dr HELEN WILSON PhD., M. Couns. B. Bus. (HRM) G. Dip. ERC. Cert SP Cert. HB & TP Cert. ERC.

Helen is co-founder of *Expressive Therapies Australia,* with Mark, and a senior trainer in Expressive Therapies and Sandplay Therapy, around Australia and internationally. She holds a degree in Human Resource Management and a Masters in Counselling through UNE, where she was awarded a faculty medal. Helen also holds a Ph.D., from the University of Notre Dame Australia, where she and Mark tied for the University medal in 2010.

Having completed all three levels of training in Emotional Release Counselling and Transpersonal Studies, Helen achieved the level of Post Graduate Diploma. In addition, she has a *Certificate in Emotional Release Counselling with Children* and a *Certificate in Sandplay Therapy*. Helen also completed advanced Sandplay Therapy training with Ruth Ammann, a close colleague of Dora Kalff, the founder of Sandplay. She is recognised by the *World Association of Sand Therapy Professionals* as a Consultant Trainer. In 1998 Helen completed further studies in Transpersonal Psychology and Holotropic Breathwork with Dr. Stanislav Grof.

Helen holds certificates in clinical counselling supervision, and has maintained a private practice as a clinical supervisor and counsellor for the last 30 years. Helen was a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in Counselling at the University of Notre Dame Australia, Fremantle, at the University of Adelaide, and the University of the Sunshine Coast. Helen now focuses on her clinical supervision practice and supporting the training of Sandplay Therapy. Helen's publications can be found at: https://expressivetherapies.au/publications.php

Therapeutic Writing is effective in addressing a number of conditions, particularly those caused by stress. There is agreement in the literature that it supports understanding of the way a client views their life experiences, and seeks solutions to their challenges.

When individuals write about emotional and personal topics, they report reduced stress and significant health improvements in a variety domains and these changes are demonstrated in both self-report and physiological measures (Graybeal, et al., 2002; Pennebaker 1997; Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999; Ramirez-Esparza & Pennebaker, 2006). A randomised controlled trial with young adults (Niles, et al., 2014) asked participants to write for about their deepest thoughts and feelings regarding their most stressful event in the past five years. The study revealed that those participants who had high emotional expressiveness showed a significant reduction in anxiety at three-month follow-up.

The course exceeded my expectations! I have really enjoyed learning from and with like-minded peers and from such experienced trainers. I loved the experiential approach to the course. The trainers were awesome, engaging and knowledgeable, and the training resources were well set out, easy to follow.
– Ngaire Wood – Guidance Officer / School Counsellor, Queensland.

I enjoyed every minute of it. Having used therapeutic-style writing with myself and with a few clients, I've been looking for training on this topic for a while and am so glad I did it. It helps me to open the scope of writing activities to offer others in a safe and responsible way. A few highlights: meeting and working with the presenters and other learners; interesting and sometimes challenging (in a good way) activities; realising the creative and therapeutic scope of using writing. – Participant from South Australia

Both Mark and Helen are knowledgeable, friendly and engaging. I really enjoy their approach to training and at no point did I feel like I wasn't good enough. The course activities were really helpful and informative. I liked having the opportunity to do some of them myself as well as that helps with understanding how to use them with a client. I found this course suits the online environment well with the use of break out rooms etc. – Jo Wilkins, Counsellor, Narrative Play and Expressive Arts Therapist.

The trainers were very professional, knowledgeable and engaging. The training materials were well-resourced. It was wonderful, a great learning experience – inspirational!
– Michelle H. – Advanced Recreation Officer.

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