

NEW TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR BICA ACCREDITED COUNSELLORS FROM 2023

The BICA foundation Course has been offered for the past 20 years and it has become part of the supporting evidence that counsellors can use in their submissions for BICA accreditation. Its format as a two day course has remained unchanged and, whilst there have been regular updates and amendments, including more time being allocated to implications counselling, the content has remained substantially the same.

The current course provides an excellent basic foundation for any generic, independent counsellor who has some clients with fertility issues – as evidenced by the extremely positive evaluations of our delegates. It is also essential for those who provide a service to a licensed fertility centre, however, over these years the work of these counsellors has become increasingly complex. We are concerned that the course does not now sufficiently equip them for work with, for example, some of the increasingly complex issues that arise in relation to donation, for fertility preservation in a range of situations and new family formations, for safeguarding in the context of the fertility clinic and to have a good enough understanding of the cultural influences that can impact the experience of infertility, its treatment and reproductive choices.

Also, as 2023 approaches, knowledge and awareness of issues related to the opening of the HFEA register to donor-conceived adults who wish to know the identity of their donor, is developing rapidly. Novel and previously unexpected issues are arising in surrogacy arrangements. BICA has a responsibility to its members, the clients who seek their services and to the clinics who employ them, to ensure that its accredited members are equipped with knowledge, understanding and skills that ensure their competence in the second decade of the 21st century.

At the Annual BICA conference it was announced that, **from April 2023**, all BICA Members will need to undertake additional training to either achieve accreditation or be re-accredited and that a two day Advanced Course had been developed.

1. The two day BICA Foundation Course for generic counsellors/therapists whose work is not necessarily related to an HFEA licensed centre will continue to be offered and there is considerable demand for it
2. Counsellors seeking accreditation for the first time will need to attend the Foundation Course and the two day Advanced Course
3. Those already working towards accreditation have until the end of March 2023 to submit or they will need to have attended the Advanced Course
4. From April 2023 all members seeking reaccreditation will need to have attended the Advanced Course.

We are delighted to be offering this additional level of training to our members and that the BICA Executive has decided to make it accessible by subsidizing the course for existing members so that the fee for the two days will be £100. It has been endorsed by the BICA Accreditation Board as well as the Executive Committee.

We expect to provide the first online Advanced Course in December 2022 and another one before April 2023. We will be mindful of the need to accommodate our members who are

due for reaccreditation, or are planning to submit their application for accreditation, from April 2023 .We will be holding Q and A sessions for members who wish to know more about the Advanced Course and this new policy. Dates for these will be announced.

Jennie Hunt
Chair, BICA Training Group
May 2022