



Course Descriptions

Certificate	Courses
Foundation Level in Conversational Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamics of Biblical Change[^] • Helping Relationships[^] • Church Pastoral Care[*] • Foundation Skills Day (optional)[*]
Intermediate Level in Conversational Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping Everyday Problems[*] • Relationships in Life and Church[*] • Scripture for Life and Ministry[^] • Intermediate Skills day (optional)[*]
Advanced Level in Theology for Biblical Counselling <i>from September 2026</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied Theology of the Person[^] • Theology and Secular Psychology[^] • Theology for Counselling[*]
Advanced Level in Skills for Biblical Counselling <i>from September 2026</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage Counselling[^] • Counselling Embodied Souls[*] • Advanced Skills Training[*]

^{*}BCUK course

[^]CCEF course

Progression

All students begin with *Dynamics of Biblical Change*. Once a student has also passed the second course, *Helping Relationships*, they may take any other courses we offer. However, we strongly recommend students complete the Foundation Certificate courses before progressing to the Intermediate level.

Foundation Certificate

Dynamics of Biblical Change

Your conversations with others are determined by how you understand God, yourself, other people, life's pressures, and, of course, the process of change. *Dynamics of Biblical Change* addresses these things and more. It describes how Christ's past grace, present grace, and future grace speak to our hearts and change the way we live our daily lives.

This course is about people and the way they (and we) face the troubles of life. It is about dealing with our inner struggles and changing into the likeness of Christ. Through Scripture, online lectures, assigned readings and case studies, you'll explore these practical ministry questions. Two personal-change projects are key to applying the principles of the course personally.

CCEF Lecturer: David Powlison (1949-2019)

David served as CCEF's executive director, as a faculty member, and as senior editor of the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*. He held a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania and an MDiv from Westminster Theological Seminary.

David wrote extensively on biblical counselling and on the relationship between faith and psychology. His books *Seeing with New Eyes* and *Speaking Truth in Love* probe the implications of Scripture for how to understand people and how to counsel. *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context* explores the background and development of CCEF's mission. David's later books include *God's Grace in Your suffering*, *How Does Sanctification work?*, *Good and Angry*, and his final work, *Safe and Sound*, which was published posthumously.

Helping Relationships

This course is intended to enhance your interpersonal ministry skills both in everyday and more intentional conversations. The skills are organised in two parts: Skills to Know People, and Skills to Apply Scripture.

Note: This course has two important features: you will take part in Community Group discussions with fellow students during the fortnightly seminars, and you will meet weekly for an hour with someone (usually from your church) to put into practice what you are learning in *Helping Relationships*. Information about these activities is supplied in your course materials.

Learning Goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand the principles and practicalities of interpersonal ministry

- Show an awareness of the character attributes that are necessary to engage in interpersonal ministry well
- Connect interpersonal ministry methods with their theological foundations
- Establish foundational skills in interpersonal ministry - particularly conversational skills - that can be built upon in the years to come
- Offer those conversational skills within the local church in ways that encourage others and promote growth.

CCEF Lecturer: Ed Welch

Ed Welch is a faculty member and counsellor at CCEF where he has served since 1981. He holds a PhD in counselling (neuro-psychology) from the University of Utah and an MDiv degree from Biblical Theological Seminary. Ed is a licensed psychologist and has been active in local church ministry for decades. He has written numerous books, including *When People Are Big and God Is Small*; *Shame, Interrupted*; *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* and *Created to Draw Near*.

Church Pastoral Care¹

What will it look like when conversational ministry is established in a local church?

The purpose of this course is:

- to enable students to better understand the nature and purpose of church
- to help students understand the nature of pastoral care and its development over the centuries to equip students to understand their ministry context and see opportunities for pastoral care to flourish
- to envision students with a range of ways in which conversational ministry could be embedded in their local church
- to see the importance of both public and private ministry of the Word and how they inter-relate
- to help students to play a part in growing a culture of care in their local congregation
- to encourage students to engage in conversational ministry in ways that are safe, collaborative and wise

Topics covered include:

Church as community; pastoral care and evangelism; praying for your church; a brief history of pastoral care and the modern biblical counselling movement; every member ministry in the local congregation; the role of pastors and elders; pastoral care structure; creating cultures of care; confidentiality; supervision; boundaries; church discipline and the role of parachurch organisations.

¹ Formerly *Counselling in the Local Church*

BCUK Lecturers: Steve Midgley and Helen Thorne-Allenson

Steve Midgley is the Executive Director of Biblical Counselling UK. For many years Steve has taught courses in biblical counselling at Oak Hill Theological College where he has been a visiting lecturer. He has co-authored *The Heart of Anger* with Christopher Ash and *Mental Health and Your Church* with Helen Thorne-Allenson, and most recently has written *Understanding Trauma: A Biblical Introduction for Church Care*. Steve is a board member of CCEF and on the board of the Biblical Counseling Coalition. Until September 2022 he was Senior Minister of Christ Church, Cambridge where he continues to have a part-time ministry role. He trained in psychiatry before being ordained.

Helen Thorne-Allenson is the Director of Training and Resources at Biblical Counselling UK. She is an experienced speaker, and author whose recent books include *5 Things to pray for a Suffering Friend*, *Hope in an Anxious World*, *Walking with Domestic Abuse Sufferers*, *Purity is Possible*, *Real Change* and *Real Change for Students* and *Mental Health and Your Church, A Church that Cares*. She has completed CCEF's certificate courses and holds an MA in Applied Theology and an MTh in Reformed Theology.

Foundation Skills Day

Foundation Skills Days are offered in our geographical locations, usually towards the end of the Spring term. This optional in-person training day will help students develop the skills taught in the Helping Relationships course, building on the understanding of the person and change taught in Dynamics of Biblical Change. It offers an opportunity to observe and practice interpersonal skills within a biblical model.

The aim of the day is to help students grow in having more fruitful one-to-one conversations. Specifically, the skills areas will be:

- Knowing a person through listening, understanding and connecting with them.
- Knowing the Lord during a conversation through seeing how another person's life connects with the story of Scripture, being able to share that truth and then to bring it to the Lord in prayer.

The day comprises interactive teaching, observation videos, reflection and dyad practice. Led by BCUK Tutors, it is open to all students who have taken *Dynamics of Biblical Change* and *Helping Relationships* (or who are in the process of taking *Helping Relationships*). Students may attend whichever location and date is convenient for them.

The Skills Day is not required to gain a Foundation Certificate, though we encourage students who wish to take the *Advanced Certificate in Skills for Biblical Counselling* to have engaged fully in the Certificate Programme and have completed at least one of the Foundation Skills Day or Intermediate Skills Day (offered during the Intermediate Certificate in Conversational Ministry).

Intermediate Certificate

Courses to be offered in the 2026-27 academic year

Helping Everyday Problems

We want to walk alongside others in ways that offer compassion, hope and transformation, and we do that as we seek to connect God's Word to their everyday struggles. But how can we grow in doing that well? Are we able to understand common pastoral problems biblically? And from there have wise and helpful conversations that are relevant to life and centred on Christ? And how will we engage the community of care that the local church provides? This course will help you understand common life struggles - like loss, anger, overwhelm, shame, and guilt - biblically and encourage you to walk wisely and well with those who struggle.

Course Objectives:

- To enable students to grow in their ability to participate in intentional conversations
- To help students structure conversations with a clear start, middle and end
- To help students grow the character and skills necessary to engage in those conversations in ways that honour Christ
- To enable students to gain a biblical understanding of a range of common pastoral struggles
- To help students think broadly about how to address common pastoral struggles in conversation – in ways that are gentle, biblical and wise
- To encourage students to engage in conversational ministry in ways that build the church

BCUK Lecturer: Helen Thorne-Allenson

Helen Thorne-Allenson is the Director of Training and Resources at Biblical Counselling UK. She is an experienced speaker, and author whose recent books include *5 Things to pray for a Suffering Friend*, *Hope in an Anxious World*, *Walking with Domestic Abuse Sufferers*, *Purity is Possible*, *Real Change* and *Real Change for Students and Mental Health and Your Church, A Church that Cares*. She has completed CCEF's certificate courses and holds an MA in Applied Theology and an MTh in Reformed Theology.

Relationships in Life and Church

For all eternity our Trinitarian God has existed in relationship. And as those created in his image, God intends relationships to be central to our lives. Nothing is more important than learning how to relate well. But how do we do that? We are finite creatures, living this side of the Fall – what does that mean for our relationships? We are also redeemed sinners passionately loved by God – what difference does that make? Right relating to God as Lord and Saviour must always come first. This

course explores how that relationship is the core which enables all other relationships to find their proper place.

Course objectives:

- To provide students with a theological foundation for understanding relationships
- To help students articulate the relational implications of worshipping a trinitarian God
- To help students develop a range of skills in intentional relationships including the setting of agenda, giving encouragement and deepening intimacy
- To help students embrace their limitations as a means of developing a God-given interdependence with others
- To enable students to understand the central place of emotion in relationships
- To equip students to explore the connections between our 'vertical' relationship with God and our 'horizontal' relationships with others
- To help students develop a biblical perspective on the key relational contexts of friendship, marriage, family and church
- To provide students with a practical perspective on managing conflict and forgiveness in relationships

BCUK Lecturer: Steve Midgley

Steve Midgley is the Executive Director of Biblical Counselling UK. Steve has been involved in teaching courses in biblical counselling at Oak Hill Theological College, Union School of Theology and Ridley Hall. He is an experienced conference speaker and has co-authored *The Heart of Anger* with Christopher Ash and *Mental Health and Your Church* with Helen Thorne-Allenson. Most recently he has written *Understanding Trauma: A Biblical Introduction for Church Care*. Steve is a board member of CCEF and on the board of the Biblical Counseling Coalition. Until September 2022 he was Senior Minister of Christ Church, Cambridge where he continues to have a part-time ministry role. He trained in psychiatry before being ordained.

Scripture for Life and Ministry

Scripture is authoritative and sufficient for ministry (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4), but how do you connect God's Word effectively to the lives and struggles of people around you? Do you frequently turn to the same familiar passages, but are less confident in using other biblical passages to communicate the power of God's love and faithfulness in the Gospel? How do you use the Bible's redemptive story in conversational ministry so that those you are speaking with grow in their knowledge of and love for the sovereign Lord? This course will help you understand both people and the Bible more thoroughly and is designed to strengthen your ability to rivet Scriptural truth to real-life ministry situations.

Through lectures, class discussion, and interpretive assignments, you'll develop your skills in interpreting and applying any passage of Scripture to help people to grow in love for God and others more fully in the midst of their complex, daily lives.

In this course, you will:

- Grow in excitement and passion for the personal application of God's Word in your own life and in the lives of others.
- Learn and practice a method of biblical interpretation that makes connections between the details of particular passages and the wider story of Scripture that centres on Jesus Christ
- Practice moving from Scripture to life by making gospel-centred connections between specific passages and the particulars of a person's life.
- Practise moving from life to Scripture by learning to frame people's struggles in ways that naturally connect with particular biblical themes and passages.

CCEF Lecturer: Mike Emlet

Mike Emlet is a counsellor and Dean of Faculty at the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (CCEF). He holds an MD from the University of Pennsylvania and an MDiv degree from Westminster Theological Seminary. He worked as a family physician for over ten years before joining CCEF in 2001. Mike has counselled for many years and has particular interests in working with ministry leaders and with those who struggle with anxiety, depression, and OCD. He writes regularly for *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* and is the author of *CrossTalk: Where Life and Scripture Meet*, which explores the use of Scripture in counselling, as well as *Descriptions and Prescriptions: A Biblical Perspective on Psychiatric Diagnoses and Medications*. His latest book is *Saints, Sufferers, and Sinners: Loving Others As God Loves Us*. Mike is married to Jody, and they have two children. He enjoys gardening, camping, and various artistic endeavours.

Intermediate Skills Day

Intermediate Skills Days are offered in various geographical locations, usually towards the end of the Spring term. This optional in-person training day will build on the skills of the Foundation Skills Day.

The Intermediate Skills Day will focus on the following skills area and skills:

- Skill Area #1: Relating to One Another

Skills: Going Deeper and Being Aware

We go deeper with someone as we ask questions with direction and follow stories, words, emotions and images that are most relevant. We converse with awareness when we pay attention to how we are relating to one another in conversation and make use of loving self-disclosure.

- Skill Area #2: Relating together to the Lord

Skills: Hearing and Living Out His Word

As we hear God's word and speak it in His way, we add to the person's story, and respond in prayer. We help someone live out His word as we envision change and enact next steps.

The day comprises interactive teaching, observation videos, reflection and dyad practice. Led by BCUK Tutors, it is open to all students who have taken *Dynamics of Biblical Change, Helping Relationships* and attended a Foundation Skills Day. Students may attend whichever location and date is convenient for them.

The Skills Day is not required to gain an Intermediate Certificate, though we encourage students who wish to take the *Advanced Certificate in Skills for Biblical Counselling* (due to be offered from the 2026-27 academic year) to have engaged fully in the Certificate Programme and have completed at least one of the Foundation Skills Day or Intermediate Skills Day.

Advanced Certificates

Courses to be offered from the 2026-27 academic year

The Advanced level of training will equip you for more formal ministry and counselling conversations and will have two certificates:

The courses in the **Advanced Certificate in Theology for Biblical Counselling** will deepen students' theological understanding of people and their problems. Courses will include CCEF's *Applied Theology of the Person*, and *Theology and Secular Psychology* and a new BCUK course, *Theology for Counselling*.

The **Advanced Certificate in Skills for Biblical Counselling** courses will help students develop advanced helping skills for more formal pastoral/counselling conversations. Courses will include CCEF's *Marriage Counselling* course, and two new BCUK courses, *Counselling Embodied Souls* and *Advanced Skills Training*.

Students will be able to take courses from one or both certificates.

Advanced Certificate in Theology for Biblical Counselling

The courses in the **Advanced Certificate in Theology for Biblical Counselling** will deepen students' theological understanding of people and their problems. Courses will include CCEF's *Applied Theology of the Person*, and *Theology and Secular Psychology* and a new BCUK course, *Theology for Counselling*.

Applied Theology of the Person

Who am I? Who are we? This course examines Scripture's unfolding answer to personal identity and corporate humanity. You will learn a theological framework for understanding yourself and those around you so that you may know people better and help more effectively.

Course objectives:

- Demonstrate understanding of important concepts in the theology of the person (e.g., image of God, embodied soul, etc.)— both what they are (definitionally) and where you find them as patterns in Scripture.
- Demonstrate ability to apply those theological concepts in both personal and ministry contexts. Demonstrate how the concepts make a concrete difference in counselling—both in how you understand the person and their struggles and how you would help (methodology). Be able to identify 3-5 concrete applications from each biblical theological category (i.e., creation, fall, rescue/resurrection) in life issues and struggles.

CCEF Lecturer: Ed Welch

Ed Welch is a faculty member and counsellor at CCEF where he has served since 1981. He holds a PhD in counselling (neuro-psychology) from the University of Utah and an MDiv degree from Biblical Theological Seminary. Ed is a licensed psychologist and has been active in local church ministry for decades. He has written numerous books, including *When People Are Big and God Is Small*; *Shame, Interrupted*; *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love* and *Created to Draw Near*.

Theology and Secular Psychology

The Theology and Secular Psychology course explores how Christian theology engages with modern psychological theories and practices. It equips students to thoughtfully evaluate secular psychologies—examining their assumptions, methods, and insights—through a biblical framework.

Students learn to understand and interpret psychological observations while also assessing their underlying worldviews. The course emphasizes developing a distinctly Christian perspective on human nature, suffering, and change, and situates biblical counselling within the broader mental health and cultural context.

Course objectives:

- Develop critical thinking and communication skills for engaging contemporary psychological theories and therapies
- Learn to understand and evaluate psychologists' observations, theories, and practices with humility and discernment
- Reinterpret psychological insights through a redemptive, theological framework
- Gain clarity on how biblical counselling relates to the wider mental health field and cultural context
- Describe and assess the philosophical and epistemological foundations of psychology from a biblical worldview
- Evaluate psychological research and practice through both scientific and theological lenses

CCEF Lecturer:

Aaron Sironi, MS, LCPC is a faculty member and counsellor at the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation (CCEF), where he has served since 2008. He holds a Master of Science in marital and family therapy from Fuller Theological Seminary and is a licensed clinical professional counsellor. He has counselled in community mental health, psychiatric hospital, and outpatient settings, and is deeply committed to integrating biblical theology with counselling practice. Sironi works closely with churches, offering training, consultation, and counselling support, and also serves on the board of CCEF Montana.

Theology for Counselling

More details to follow...

Course objectives:

BCUK Lecturer:

Advanced Certificate in Skills for Biblical Counselling

The **Advanced Certificate in Skills for Biblical Counselling** courses will help students develop advanced helping skills for more formal pastoral/counselling conversations. Courses will include CCEF's *Marriage Counselling* course, and two new BCUK courses, *Counselling Embodied Souls* and *Advanced Skills Training*.

Marriage Counselling

This course introduces Marriage Counseling as a complex, dynamic, and yet rewarding form of counseling. This course will provide you with a basic theological framework and methodology for counseling that will help move couples beyond and beneath complaints to address dynamics, heart movements, and interpersonal patterns.

Course objectives:

- Engage a robust theology of marriage, divorce, and remarriage to build a secure foundation for marriage [ministry].
- Identify key dynamics that prevent couples from engaging fruitfully and safely in marriage counselling.
- Investigate what goes wrong in marriage and learn how to work helpfully with struggling couples.
- Track destructive conflict patterns and probe underneath into heart desires, fears, and hidden doubts.
- Develop specific marriage counselling skills in both conjoint and individual marriage counselling.
- Reflect personally upon and apply conflict patterns to close relationships.

CCEF Lecturer:

Aaron Sironi, MS, LCPC

Aaron Sironi, is a faculty member and counsellor at Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation, where he has served since 2008. He holds a Master of Science in marital and family therapy from Fuller Theological Seminary and is a licensed clinical professional counsellor. Sironi has experience in community mental health, psychiatric hospital, and outpatient settings, and is particularly focused on integrating biblical counselling with real-life ministry. He is passionate about partnering with local churches and equipping pastors through consultation, training, and counselling, and also serves on the board of CCEF Montana.

Counselling Embodied Souls

To help students explore and understand the practical theology of a biblical body-soul anthropology, and to equip them with an approach to counselling ministry that takes account of the whole person and exhibits a discernment of bodily and spiritual issues.

Course objectives:

- To understand and articulate body-soul anthropology and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a range of biblical understandings of the whole person.
- To understand our own embodied discipleship and practice active engagement of our bodies in following Christ.
- To equip with skills for counselling ministry that are grounded in a biblical body-soul anthropology toward ministry that is attentive to the influence and activity of the body.
- To articulate the relevance of scripture for embodied struggles.
- To understand common body-based problems and be able to minister with wise care and an attentiveness to church context.

BCUK Lecturer:

Andrew Collins serves with Biblical Counselling UK (BCUK) as Director of the Counselling Ministry. He has spent many years working as a consultant psychiatrist in Belfast while also providing part-time biblical counselling. He is an elder at his local church in Portadown, Northern Ireland. His work focuses on equipping and supporting church leaders and carers to grow in wisdom and skill in pastoral counselling ministry.

Advanced Skills Training

Course objectives:

CCEF Lecturer: