

## The Meaning of “Counsellor”

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I do not believe that psychological counselling can legitimately lay claim to the notions of counselling and counsellor as it predominantly does. (Schuster, 1999, p.3)

**Keywords:** *counsellor, philosophical counselling, psychotherapy, mental health, semantics, lexicography, regulation, title protection.*

### Abstract

The UK government intends to regulate mental health care professions by enforcing title protection of the terms “counsellor” and “psychotherapist.” The operational definition they have adopted for “counsellor”—a specialist in psychological therapy—is not recorded in any authoritative source as an exclusive, predominant or fundamental meaning of the term. In fact, there is no evidence that it is an independent sense in its own right, unlike the professional titles “psychotherapist,” “doctor,” and “psychologist.”

It is only in recent decades that the term “counsellor” has been interpreted as the title of a psychological profession. It was first used within the context of psychological therapy in 1940 by Carl Rogers to denote a therapist directing a non-programmatic “client-centred” session, and was eventually absorbed into the occupational dialect of psychology as a descriptor, but did not constitute the title of a separate profession. It also continued to have applications outside the context of psychotherapy. However, various linguistic tropes have contributed to a widespread misconception that it is primarily a professional title for psychological therapists who eschew programmatic therapies. The term was progressively adopted by non-therapists who offered vocational talking-and-listening services.

A careful semantic analysis reveals that the PLG’s interpretation of the term rests on a confusion of sense and reference, a widespread but erroneous assumption about the role of counsellors, a failure to acknowledge the limits of an occupational dialect, biased categorical heuristics, and ignorance of modifying terms. There is a more constructive approach, which accords with the observation that counselling is an activity rather than a profession and is more faithful to the original semantics of the key terms.

**Philosophy of Thought and the Relationship to CBT:  
An Existential Analysis—What’s Wrong with Being a Robot?**

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**Keywords:** *CBT, neural networks, reductionism, mental health, mindfulness, existentialism*

**Abstract**

This paper is a result of trying to understand competing ideologies: cognitive science and existentialism. My role as a cognitive behavioural therapist has allowed me to reflect on clinical cases and the nature of thinking. Cognitive behavioural theory and the effects of psychotropic medication are explored in terms of neural networks. However, does this reductionist viewpoint take away from ‘being human’? It is suggested that by accepting the role of neural networks as the main factor in explaining our beliefs and ultimately our behaviours, existential anxiety or the distress from searching for meaning can be reduced. People can learn to be in the world in the here and now and if necessary adopt aspects of cognitive behavioural therapy such as mindfulness and acceptance as a means of regulating their difficulties.

## Socratic Wonder and Philosophical Counseling

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SOCRATES: Surely you're following, Theaetetus; it's my impression at any rate that you're not inexperienced in things of this sort.

THEAETETUS: Yes indeed, by the gods, Socrates, I wonder exceedingly as to why (what) in the world these things are, and sometimes in looking at them I truly get dizzy.

SOCRATES: The reason is, my dear, that, apparently, Theodorus' guess about your nature is not a bad one, for this experience is very much a philosopher's, that of wondering. For nothing else is the beginning (principle) of philosophy than this, and, seemingly, whoever's genealogy it was, that Iris was the offspring of Thaumás (Wonder), it's not a bad one.

—Plato, *Theaetetus*

**Keywords:** *wonder, counseling, dialectic, misology, myth, reductionist*

### Abstract

Plato and Aristotle state that the governing principle of philosophy is wonder. This paper explores how Socrates provoked wonder in his interlocutors, what he himself found to be wondrous, and how this wonder is pertinent to philosophical counseling. Vignettes from two of Plato's most beloved dialogues, the *Phaedo* and the *Phaedrus*, provide the primary material for this exploration. Specific themes that are addressed within the contexts of wonder and philosophical counseling include the threat of misology, the context of belief, the importance of philosophical commitment, and the allure and limitations of reductionist thinking.

**Consistency versus Mediation  
Towards Use of the Tetris Model in Philosophical Counselling**

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**Keywords:** *world-view, beliefs, principles, ideas, values, opinions, impulses, ego, id, superego, Tetris, rational thinking, philosophical counselling, fallacies, assumptions, cognitive biases.*

**Abstract**

We put forward the premise that existential problems that a counsellor can work out through dialogue sometimes originate in the disorder and confusion of a person's system of ideas. Applying the criterion of consistency is thus of prime importance in enabling the individual who suffers discomfort caused by this to take a first step towards feeling better.