MICHAEL CONTI

Therapist, clinical supervisor and trainer



About me as a trainer

I came into this work through teaching. I trained as a biology teacher and spent my early years in classrooms, first teaching science and later personal and social development, before moving into counselling and psychotherapy. That background still shapes how I train today: I care about people actually taking something away with them, and I know that learning happens best when people feel safe enough to be curious, to ask what they think might be a silly question and to bring in their own experience.

My training work is informed by the same principles that guide my clinical practice. I see people as relational beings, and much of what we learn about ourselves and our clients happens in relationship, including in the training room. I also bring attention to the body, because a lot of what therapists pick up from clients is felt before it is understood. Everything I teach is trauma-informed, which means I pace the work carefully and don't push people through material faster than they can take it in. Depth matters more to me than covering a long list of content.

As a queer, gay man, I bring lived experience as well as professional knowledge to training on sexuality and gender. This often helps participants ask the questions they have been holding back, and explore their own assumptions without feeling judged.

Areas I train in

- Working affirmatively with LGBTQ+ clients, including sexuality, kink and BDSM, and non-monogamous relationships
- Erotic transference and countertransference in therapy and supervision
- Trauma-informed and somatic approaches to therapeutic work
- Psychedelic-assisted therapy, including preparation, integration and the erotic in expanded states
- Self-care and sustainability for therapists and frontline workers

Experience

I have delivered training on LGBTQ+ issues to a wide range of organisations, including the Foundation for Social Welfare Services Malta, the Malta Association for the Counselling Profession, the Malta Psychological Association, University of Malta Counselling Services, Richmond Foundation Malta and Dansk Psykoterapeutforening. I have also run self-care training for therapists and mental health training for organisations outside the therapy field.

In the UK, I was Senior Counsellor and Deputy Head of Service at the London Fire Brigade Counselling and Trauma Service, working closely with trauma in the period after Grenfell, and I was a supervisor and tutor on an MA in Advanced Clinical Practice. In Malta I have been a guest lecturer on Master's programmes and an external examiner for Master's dissertations.

More recently, my work has turned towards psychedelics. I co-facilitate psilocybin retreats in the Netherlands, have accompanied individuals at Centre Mokxa in Barcelona, and have presented on MDMA and the erotic, as well as on psychedelic-assisted therapy at a chemsex conference.

Qualifications

- MSc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy
- MA in Integrative Supervision
- Licensed with the Malta Psychotherapy Professions Board
- European Certificate for Psychotherapy (EAP)
- EMDR training
- Ketamine-assisted psychotherapy training
- Somatic sexuality training
- ICF Diploma in Integrative Coaching

Publications

- *Living Better with Yourself: A Practical Guide to Embodied Growth* (2021)
- "The experience of crossing borders", *Tidsskrift for Psykoterapi* (2020)

Languages and format

I train in English, online and in person.