Online Resource Learning Activity 1. Reflection on the personal meaning of entering the world of therapy research

The following questions are intended to support personal reflection, writing in a personal learning journal or blog, and dialogue with learning partners or in seminar groups.

*What is your attitude to research?* What assumptions and belief do you bring to the task of learning about research in counselling and psychotherapy? What kind of research training and experience have you had in the past? How do you understanding the role and contribution of science in relation to social justice and individual well-being? What do you consider to be the strengths and limitations of quantitative/statistical and qualitative/narrative ways of knowing about the world? In what ways do you think that your stance in relation to science and research might influence your willingness to engage with therapy research and use it to inform you work as a therapist? In what ways might your stance influence your choice of research topic and research methodology?

*What is the extent of your exposure to therapy research so far*? Make a list of the therapy research studies or research programmes that you know about, including specific research papers that you have read. What are the research findings that have particularly influenced or intrigued you? How many research papers have our read over the last year? In relation to your purpose or reason for reading the present book, how might you need or want to increase the intensity of your engagement with the research literature? How might you do that? Who might help or support you in that endeavour, and in what ways?

*What are the ‘big’ questions that therapy research should be able to answer?* Take a few moments to think about the most significant and helpful ways that therapy research could contribute to enabling therapy provision to be more effective, accessible and relevant? It is useful to compare your therapy research ‘wish-list’ with those compiled by your learning partners, to gain a wider appreciation of the potential implications of research knowledge in the field of counselling and psychotherapy. Keep a note of these reflections and discussions – as you become more familiar with the therapy research literature as a whole, look back at them from time to time to check the extent to which these big research questions have in fact been addressed. If they haven’t – why not? It can also be instructive to rflect on how and why your research priorities may have changed.

*Who is in your research team?* One of the key ideas in Chapter 1 is that research is a collective and collaborative endeavour. As you enter the world of research, who are the people who might be available to guide and support you in your journey? How satisfying and supportive is your contact with these individuals? In what ways might the collaborative dimension of your research be enhanced? If you are at the stage of planning a research study, who can you recruit to your team? As well as people you might know at a personal level, such as friends, colleagues and research supervisors, what kinds of supportive relationships might it be possible for you to access within professional organisations? How diverse is your team – does it or could it include individuals whose experience of privilege and adversity is different from your own?