

# Essential Training Standards in Group-Analytic Psychotherapy\*

Item 1.

## **Essential general aims for training organisations:**

- 1.1:** The study, education and promotion of group-analytic theory and method (as set out and developed by Foulkes and his followers) and research in both clinical and applied fields.
- 1.2:** The acquisition of a group-analytic attitude and a professional group-analytic identity.
- 1.3:** The maintenance of high standards of professional practice and ethical conduct.

Item 2.

## **Essential basic assumptions and underlying philosophy of group-analytic training.**

- 2.1:** Emphasis on communication and the social nature of man and the defining features of the socio-cultural environment (social origins).
- 2.2:** The assumption of the primacy of the relational matrix (the individual acquires definition in relation to the group) (Gestalt origins).
- 2.3:** The assumption of a personal and collective (social) unconscious (psycho-analytic origins).
- 2.4:** The assumption of open systems (persons, groups, organisations) in dynamic equilibrium, constantly adapting (systemic origins).

Item 3.

## **Essential theory and core concepts in group analysis**

### **Group Analysis**

History and development; place in the field of group therapies; relationship to other theories.

### **Core concepts:**

network, matrix (dynamic and foundation), communication, translation, mirroring, resonance, location, polarisation, transference, counter-transference, projective identification and other projective processes, transpersonal processes, anxiety and defence, resistance, creative and destructive processes and working through.

### **Key concepts defining method:**

The setting, group boundary, conductor (group analyst) as dynamic administrator/container/ translator of communications, the therapeutic action of group analysis (therapy by the group), selection, group composition, phases of development, indications, groups in special settings with special populations, applied group analysis, median and large groups, organisations.

### **Other Relevant Theories**

Psychoanalytic theories; sociological theories (especially Norbert Elias' figurational sociology); Gestalt psychology (figure/ground; whole as different to the sum of the parts); phenomenology; systems and

communication theory; lifespan and developmental psychology; attachment theory; and other relevant theories (eg neurobiology, contemporary theories of gender etc) and sources of knowledge.

Item 4.

## **Core skills essential to the practice of group analysis**

### **Developing a group-analytic attitude**

Capacity to form and sustain relationships based on concern and respect for others; to respect the terms of an agreed treatment contract (aims, confidentiality); to avoid using patients for gratification of needs or relief of anxiety.

Relevant personal qualities: empathy, self-awareness, ego-strength, reliability and ethical conduct. Other relevant personal qualities: energy and spirit, humour, problem solving, historical memory, intelligence.

### **Dynamic Administration/Executive Function**

Capacity to establish and maintain boundaries (the frame of the group); to occupy with authority the role of the therapist; to organise and manage the setting, negotiate treatment contracts and liaise between institutions and relevant external networks.

### **Holding and Containing function**

Capacity to tolerate anxiety, frustration and affects (one's own and those projected onto one); to work with counter-transference to therapeutic effect; to hold onto analytic technique.

### **Analysing and Translating function**

Observational skills and reflective capacities highly developed.

### **Developing a dynamic, mobile perspective:**

- (a) moving between engaging in the process (identifying) and reflecting and observing
- (b) linking different levels of communication (translation) – conscious and unconscious, verbal and non-verbal
- (c) linking group, subgroup and individual
- (d) linking structure, process and content
- (e) moving between different levels of transference – current, transference, projective and primordial levels

Locating meaning in context

Capacity to facilitate the group process, the building of a therapeutic culture and the transfer of therapeutic agency from conductor to group

Skills and intervention strategies to deal with blockages in communication and destructive processes in groups

Capacity to make therapeutic judgements based on a response to the needs of the group in the language of the group

Developing one's creativity and personal style.

Item 5.

## **Training structures and requirements**

**5.1:** Training is best accomplished in the tripartite structure of personal therapy in a group, theory seminars and supervised practice, which may take place in a continuous or block structure or a combination of the two.

**5.2:** Therapy, theory seminars and supervised practice should overlap at least for a minimum duration during the qualifying training, with possibilities of extended therapy, theory seminars or supervision before or after this minimum training period.

**5.3:** Trainees should have different trainers for therapy and supervision.

**5.4:** In the case of therapists also teaching, this should be limited in such a way as to fully take into account the need to protect therapeutic boundaries.

**5.5:** A median or large group experience is essential to the training

**5.6:** Therapy may take place in a mixed patient/trainee or a trainee-only group.

**5.7:** Therapy should take place exclusively in a group, which meets in person, at least for a substantial part of the group-analytic training.

**5.8:** That trainees conduct a once-weekly group that extends over the duration of at least two years. This group should take place at a minimum frequency of one session (90 minutes) per week.

**5.9:** That presentation of a clinical paper, theoretically informed, is an essential requirement for completion of the training.

**5.10:** That trainees are required to complete at least 240 hours (160 x 90 minute sessions) of personal group-analytic therapy in a small therapy group. In addition, large/median group sessions may contribute towards the total group therapeutic experience. In block training, there should be a minimum frequency of 5 blocks per year.

**5.11:** That trainees are required to participate in a supervisory process for at least 120 hours during training and that this should extend over the period of setting up and conducting their two-year training group. Supervision of training groups should take place exclusively in a group, which meets in person and with no more than more than 8 members and at an average frequency of not less that fortnightly. In block training models, approved local supervisors and peer supervision may be used. Under certain circumstances supervision can be conducted partly via skype or tele-conference.

**5.12:** That trainees are required to complete at least 160 hours of theory seminars covering the curriculum outlined in Item 3.

**5.13:** That training programmes should extend over a minimum period of three years (post-introductory) during which the required minimum hours of therapy, theory seminars and supervision take place simultaneously. Some therapy, supervision or theory may take place before or after this three-year period.

Item 6.

## **Essential structures and procedures for delivery of training and maintenance of standards**

**6.1:** There should be a reliable constitutional framework and an ethical code.

**6.2:** It should be clear where the authority is held for decision-making and there should be an appeals procedure.

**6.3:** Training organisations should include structures for selecting and admitting students to training.

**6.4:** Admission requirements should include completion of a degree or relevant professional qualification, completion of an introductory course and some clinical and/or psychiatric experience prior to training.

**6.5:** There should be procedures for assessing progress during training and for qualification.

**6.6:** There should be procedures for selecting trainers.

**6.7:** Students should have a voice regarding training matters.

**6.8:** There should be a constant development of organisational structures and standards.

Essential Training Standards will be reviewed at least every five years.

*(Please note: 1 hour = 60 minutes)*

*Revised by EGATIN Committee November 2017*