



Centre for Training in Psychotherapy

The CTP Orientation

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Welcome!

I want to tell you things you may not know about this programme—you that are beginning and you that have been here.

In 1986 we launched CTP as such, sent out a brochure and duly registered its name. It was born of a convergence of people interested for some time in such an endeavour. These people and associates met for a couple of years to establish a consensus and create a curriculum.

Now, some of those discussants were meanwhile also involved in a programme that had been set up, at first piecemeal and ad hoc, in response to requests. People who had been in therapy and were themselves in similar professions asked some of their therapists for courses on theory. Such people were practicing massage or social work or were in the school system and wanted some theoretical foundation. Others still were studying theory and/or were working in jobs that threw them into the emotional thick of things—that threw them, at times, to the lions of their own irrationalities. They wanted some forum for working on their own depths.

In 1984 a modest programme was offered. A series of lectures on clinical theory and a psychodynamic group. Grant Goodbrand was an important architect of the theoretical component. Associated with him were Philip McKenna, Anna Binswanger-Healy, Larry Rooney, Marion Goodbrand and Jim Healy who conducted the first group, and I. We called this the Kendal Group because we met at Jim and Anna's home at 84 Kendal for most of our meetings.

Meanwhile, discussions proceeded as well in the larger group of people meeting with a view to starting a training institute. They were exciting conversations, but also wildly difficult and at times stormy. It was a process of describing the baby we wished to deliver and the rearing practices we would adopt. Many of us were keen to avoid unwholesome influences in our own training—vigilant lest they reappear in mutant guise. Ghosts were rattling at the meetings. Eventually it was acknowledged that we already *had* a living, breathing learning group. It was alive and robust. Thus it was that what was going on in the Kendal Group, and had been going on for at least two years, now took on the added lustre of being a pilot programme. All of you know at least two of its alumni—Gayle Burns and Ken Ludlow. Another, who will be leading a foundation seminar this year, is Leah Lucas.

The CTP programme opened in September of 1986 and was now offered by this larger faculty. New students joined the Kendal students. But for the first time, many of them were unknown to the collective of therapists. They came Monday evenings for both lectures and seminars. They also began a weekly group. In its essentials, then, it was like your first year.

In 1986, though, that first year was the first year for everyone. The faculty also attended along with everyone else. I think it was Joel who called the programme we envisioned “a learning community”. In any case, he suggested that we faculty should put ourselves through the training and stand in that relationship to the students. (We didn't join the learning groups, I'm happy to say, or like that good ship, we'd have gone down with all hands, not to mention arms and legs).



In the first two to three years we tried to make the lecture series meet all needs—students should at least know what’s happening in psychoanalysis, we said, as well as cognitive, Reichian and transpersonal authors. They were plied with handouts. Then someone complained that we were giving them no sense of actual sessions. We should discuss case histories—and so forth. We were like yuppie parents showing flash cards to babes in arms.

Fortunately, a third year, a formation phase, was soon in place. A practicum and seminars and so on. Another major landmark was when the first students began to see clients. I thought at the time that it was a quantum change and that as we became a school in which several students were seeing clients, *everything* would be affected—including how the first year students did their learning.

I think something similar now about the growing *pondus* of students who have graduated (about 15 I think) and who are a rich presence in the school, but who are also finding their feet independently of its initiatives.

We have a carefully articulated programme now, a manual, but it continues to evolve, sensitive to changes within and around it.

I want to signal two choices made in the planning of CTP that I consider decisive:

1. One is the decision reached in the planning stages, in the big meeting stage, not to require an academic degree. Students must be capable of academic work at a university level because the theory is difficult. But they don’t have to come with university degrees. We decided that because we didn’t consider them essential for the practice of psychotherapy and we anticipated a number of intelligent people applying who were rich in life experience. Rich in experience that was comparable at least to a BA—raising a family, for example, or involvement in challenging volunteer or career work.
2. A second decision that I think was a crucial one was that we would not regard any course or group work people had done previous to coming here as meeting *our* requirements. So that if someone comes already impressively learned in clinical theory, they still begin with everyone else at the first night of the lecture series. Similarly, if others arrive having been in groups for years, they begin their first year of group with their fellow students.

Why do I think that decision’s been crucial? Because it’s meant there is no “fast track” here. Everyone here takes this whole programme, and when on graduation evening we come together to celebrate, we are honouring people who have immersed themselves in the same endeavours.

I’ve studied quite a lot of theory, but I can honestly say that if I were given two years to study the theorists who constitute the lecture series, I’d do it—and I’d have to work very hard besides.



These two decisions have done much to establish CTP as “a learning community”.

I’m grateful that we don’t have gradations in the school based on trainings exterior to this specific training.

I’m grateful that no exceptions are made for the wares you bring with you.

I’m grateful that you, my fellow faculty, are all as intent upon learning as our students are. For as students, we really are equals.

I’m grateful we faculty don’t have the burden of offering a training that is requisite for practicing psychotherapy in Ontario. We offer instead a place to learn psychotherapy for its own sake—an *ars disciplinae*.

In this is a wonderful lightness of being!