

Psychotherapy Training Group
FDN-000-PTG

Group leaders:

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Prerequisite:

Enrolment in CTP Program – The Theory and Practice of Psychotherapy

Times: Tuesday Wednesday and Thursday evenings from September to late May or early June

Location: The Centre for Training in Psychotherapy
316 Dupont St
Toronto, On

The practice of psychotherapy is the assessment and treatment of cognitive, emotional or behavioural disturbances by psychotherapeutic means delivered through a therapeutic

relationship based primarily on verbal or non-verbal communication

The psychodynamic psychotherapy groups are a core experiential training for students who are preparing to practice psychotherapy in this modality. They provide a foundational learning activity that extends over 4 years, in weekly meetings and intensive weekends, for a total of 440 hours.

The training groups are psychodynamic in their approach and derive especially from psychoanalytic psychotherapy theory and practice.

Group participation provides an exceptional empirical tool for students to integrate more substantially the clinical theory and practice that they are studying at the same time. Their extensive work in group provides them with a kind of internship, both prior to and during their supervised practice of psychotherapy.

Group participation instills collegiality; a learned way, it becomes the preferred way, characterizing students' training and practice of psychotherapy.

Group participation also offers very effective tools for self-assessment and for evaluation of their readiness to enter the clinical phase, to practice psychotherapy under supervision, and to graduate from the program.

Objectives and Requirements of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Training Groups

The training group modality and its corresponding 'contract' derives from psychoanalytic psychotherapy: It is based on a disciplined attention to oneself as subject, in interaction with others committed to the same discipline.

As students of psychodynamic therapy, each participant must be committed to:

- 1) developing awareness of oneself as a subject (one's thoughts, emotions and physical states), while engaged with other students who are committed to practicing the same awareness.
- 2) trying to convey these subjective experiences to others as clearly as one is able.
- 3) openness to the feedback of others and to learning to make use of it.

Group leaders meet with new members to explain the nature of group work as thoroughly as possible, and to make clear what is required of its participants:

- 1) The group process must be kept confidential, so that all communication about group exchanges take place only in group sessions where every participant is present to the full and continuing interaction. This is a crucial boundary. The only exceptions to it are participants' conversations with their individual therapists and occasional communications with the group therapists.
- 2) Students are required to attend each group session. If they are unable to, they should inform the group leaders of the group as soon as possible.
- 3) During the time they are in group together they are asked to refrain from socializing with each other. They must not become sexually involved with other group members.

4) Students must be in regular and frequent therapy with an individual psychodynamic therapist of their choice throughout the extent of their time in group. This is an indispensable condition for the personal grounding and appropriation that group work demands.

Developing the relevant competencies proves to be especially effective and substantial under the cross-modal conditions CTP has used to structure its psychodynamic training group therapy:

Group work is learning in the form of praxis, by experience that informs students' understanding and appropriation of theory in ways that will subsequently inform their practice. Students' concurrent study of psychodynamic theory and practice in other course work intensifies that understanding and integration.

Group therapy offers them an opportunity for profound personal growth, while at the same time all its participants are training with the shared objective of preparing themselves to practice psychodynamic psychotherapy well and effectively. It is a praxis that strongly supports the safe and effective use of self.

Groups so structured develop the **Foundations** competencies--each of which begins with “*integrate*” and many emphasize working within one’s therapeutic framework. The four years in group develop profound and substantial capacities for **Collegial & Interprofessional Relationships**, for collaboration and communication. Four intensive years in group immerse students in the **Therapeutic Process**: its **core conditions for therapy**, and inculcate the **safe and effective use of self in the therapeutic relationship**.

It can be said that such experiential learning is active in every group session.

Psychodynamic psychotherapy training groups help form and instill the following Competencies:

1. Foundations

1.1 integrate a theory of human psychological functioning.

Integrate knowledge of human development across the lifespan; integrate knowledge of contextual and systemic factors that facilitate or impair human functioning; integrate knowledge of the psychological significance of spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, sexual, gender, and biological development.

1.2 Work within a framework based upon established psychotherapeutic theory

Integrate the theory or theories upon which the therapist’s practice is based;

integrate knowledge of how human problems develop, from the view point of the therapist's orientation; establish a therapeutic relationship informed by the theoretical framework; integrate a theory of change consistent with the therapist's theoretical orientation; integrate knowledge of the impact of trauma on psychological functioning.

1.3 Integrate knowledge of comparative psychotherapy relevant to practice

Integrate key concepts common to all psychotherapy practice.

1.4 Integrate awareness of self in relation to professional role.

Integrate knowledge of the impact of the therapist's self on the therapeutic process; recognize how the therapist's values and attitudes, both in and out of awareness, may impact diverse clients; recognize the cognitive, emotional and behavioural patterns of the therapist that may influence the therapeutic relationship; recognize instances where the therapist's life experiences may enhance or compromise therapeutic effectiveness.

1.5 Integrate knowledge of human and cultural diversity

Integrate knowledge of human diversity; recognize how oppression, power and social injustice may affect the client and also the therapeutic process; adapt the therapist's approach when working with culturally diverse clients.

2. Collegial & Interprofessional Relationships

2.1 Use effective professional communication.

Use clear and concise oral communication; communicate in a manner appropriate to the recipient; use effective listening skills; differentiate fact from opinion; recognize and respond appropriately to non-verbal communication.

2.2 Maintain effective relationships

Show respect to others; maintain appropriate professional boundaries; recognize and address conflict in a constructive manner; demonstrate personal and professional integrity.

2.3 Contribute to a collaborative and productive atmosphere.

Create and sustain working relationships with colleagues of diverse socio-cultural identities.

4. Therapeutic Process

4.2 Establish and maintain core conditions for therapy.

Employ empathy, respect, and authenticity; establish rapport; demonstrate

awareness of the impact of the client's context on the therapeutic process; demonstrate sensitivity to the setting in which therapy takes place; assume non-judgmental positions; foster client autonomy; employ effective skills in observation of self, the client, and the therapeutic process; dependability.

4.3 Ensure safe and effective use of self in the therapeutic relationship.

Demonstrate awareness of the impact of the therapist's subjective context on the therapeutic process; recognize the influence of power dynamics within the therapeutic relationship; employ effective and congruent verbal and non-verbal communication.

Outcomes and Assessments

Group therapy is an extended praxis, during which all of the named competencies are in play in each and every group session. Students' facility with the competencies gradually becomes more fluent and integrated over the four years of group experience. Unlike most other course work it resists division into sections. Furthermore, each student's progression through it is unique. There are some markers over the course of the four years that call for evaluating progress. Typically the challenge for first year participants is to grasp the meaning and value of their commitment to expressing subjective experience and receiving that of others; and to understand how confidentiality is a necessary condition for deepening and ensuring that commitment. Once they recognize how breaches of confidentiality can vitiate the success of group work, its members come to exact confidentiality from each other, as do group leaders. It is a condition for continuing in group.

At the end of their second year in group, students typically decide whether to apply for entrance into the clinical phase. It is a time of assessment by themselves and others of their readiness to advance. Their group experience figures largely in arriving at that decision, in particular the feedback they receive from group leaders and other group members. An assessment of their group experience figures prominently in the formal applications of those who ask to advance.

At the end of their third year, students typically apply to practice psychodynamic therapy under supervision. Again, their group experience is pivotal in weighing readiness for this significant advancement. Assimilation and broadening of competencies are more solid as the communication networks set up in the group have become more diverse and extensive: a broader range of people are now within one's emotional world and with it the ability to work from a more sophisticated appreciation of the importance of empathy, respect and honesty in therapy and a clearer understanding of their impact on others in a therapeutic setting. They evidence a growing capacity for safe and effective use of self. In their formal applications to practice under supervision their presentation and self evaluation of their group experience is a weighty factor in their advancement. In these faculty decisions to advance a student to the clinical phase and to actual practice under supervision, the assessment of readiness by their training group leaders carries special weight.

At the end of the fourth and final year of group, students are typically engaged in their second

year of practice under supervision and still a year or more from graduating.

Outcomes expected at the completion of four years of psychodynamic training group therapy

Students should have acquired the ability:

- to practice psychodynamic psychotherapy with an integrated and foundational understanding of its clinical theory and practice.
- to treat clients respectfully, empathically, honestly, ethically and, professionally
- to understand the importance of responding appropriately to client's strengths, vulnerabilities, resilience and resources so as to provide an ambience where they feel safe
- to practice from an acquired sense of one's strengths and weaknesses
- to continue their ongoing habit of self awareness that is open and receptive to their subtle and less conscious activities, in order to discern the effect both consciously and unconsciously that they are having on their clients—so as to practice safe and effective use of self..
- to discern the defences of resistance, repression, and dissociation in their clients and what intensifies or lessens them.
- to recognize transference in clients and their own counter-transferences
- to be open to diversity in gender identity and sexual orientation and to learning about it
- to be open to people with diverse ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds and to learning about them
- for an ongoing knowledge and sensitivity to the spiritual dimensions of working with each client
- to integrate knowledge of the maturational challenges and experience from infancy to old age and dying into their work with clients
- to be keenly aware of the need to maintain collegial supports such as supervision to assess their work with clients regularly.
- to work with clients' emotional range and intensity, conflict and confrontations, and to recognize these as opportunities for change.
- to recognize the effects of trauma in clients and to discern the degree of harm caused in case referral is called for.

Group psychotherapy is a challenging component of a training program. It requires skilled therapists and cannot be carried out without the support of a faculty that deeply appreciates

the value of psychodynamic group training. Though it cannot be expected that students will leave a group even after four years without enactment still active though unrecognized in their behaviour, they regularly acknowledge the transformative effect of their group work on themselves and in their work with clients.

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1	9/16/2016	Issued for Faculty Use	PL	CTP