



The CTP Psychotherapy Training Group Syllabus, 2020-21

Psychodynamic psychotherapy training groups provide a core experiential foundation for students who are preparing to practice psychotherapy in this modality. This learning experience extends over four years of weekly meetings and four weekend intensives per school year. The training groups are psychodynamic in their approach and derive especially from psychoanalytic psychotherapy theory and practice, augmented by other approaches included in the CTP training (e.g. current traumatology, attachment theory and alternate paradigm theory).

The interactive group learning process is facilitated by experienced registered psychotherapists. Group members, through interactions with each other, recreate familiar patterns of interpersonal relationships. In this way, the training group becomes a social microcosm for each member as familiar maladaptive responses and behaviours are played out in a vivid manner. Examples of this include avoidance, withdrawal, passive-aggressiveness and uncontrolled anger. Group members also demonstrate and develop their strengths, resilience, and creative responses.

Using verbal and nonverbal cues, group members help each other identify defenses, fantasies, and motivations that interfere with their personal relationships. Group members have an opportunity to reflect on patterns of behaviour, including conflicts and projections, and begin the “working through” process.

The work in training group is accomplished in the "here-and now". Besides discovering maladaptive behaviour through meaningful personal experiences, group members have the opportunity to disconfirm negative beliefs about themselves and others. Group members also have the opportunity to work through relationship difficulties and to develop new and more satisfying responses to enhance and enrich their relationships. In this way, the training group can bring about a corrective emotional experience.

CTP recognizes that, based on their personal history, each student comes to the training group with a unique perspective on what creates safety in a group setting. This perspective includes the ethnic and cultural backgrounds that shape one’s manner of verbal and non-verbal expression. Faculty strives to ensure that the training group environment is a space that affords an opportunity for growth while being respectful of and sensitive to each student’s individuality and cultural background.

Objectives and Requirements of Psychotherapy Training Groups

At the beginning of each school year, prior to the whole group meeting, training group facilitators meet with new group members to explain the nature of group work as thoroughly as possible,

and to make clear what is required of each participant. New group members are advised of the following:

- The training group process is confidential. All communication about training group interaction takes 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 this are group members' conversations with their individual therapists and, on occasion, conversations with their training group facilitators.
- Students are required to attend each training group session. If they are unable to attend, they should inform the facilitators as soon as possible.
- During the time they are in the training group together, group members are required to refrain from socializing with each other. They must also refrain from becoming sexually involved with each other.
- Students must be in ongoing, weekly, individual psychodynamic psychotherapy with a psychodynamic therapist of their choice throughout the extent of their time in the training group. This is an indispensable condition for the personal grounding and appropriation that group work demands.

Training group members must be committed to the following:

- Developing increased awareness of oneself as a subject (one's thoughts, feelings, and physical states) while engaging with fellow group members who are committed to practicing the same awareness.
- Working to communicate their subjective experiences to others as clearly as they are able.
- Developing capacity and openness to receiving constructive feedback from others and demonstrating a willingness to learn from the feedback.
- Recognizing that, through their behaviour, group members draw both positive and negative responses from other group members.

The CTP Psychotherapy Training Group facilitates the integration of theory, personal experience and practice. Developing the relevant competencies has proven to be especially effective and substantial under the conditions that CTP has used to structure its Psychotherapy Training Group.

- * Training group work is learning in the form of praxis, experiences that inform students' understanding and appropriation of theory in ways that will subsequently inform their therapeutic practice.
 - Group members' concurrent study of psychodynamic theory and practice in other academic course work intensifies this understanding and integration.
 - Training groups afford students an opportunity for profound personal growth, while working towards the shared objective of preparing to practice psychodynamic

psychotherapy effectively. It is a praxis that strongly supports the competency of safe and effective use of self (SEUS).

Psychotherapy Training Group helps form and instill the following competencies.

<ADD LINK TO CRPO COMPETENCIES>

1. Foundations

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.

1.4 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

4.1 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 (SEUS) 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.

Assessment

Although each student's progression through training group is unique, a student's facility with the competencies should become more fluent and integrated over the four years of training group experience. There are markers for each of the four years that are considered in evaluating progress. Attention is paid throughout the course to development of a professional ethical sensibility.

First-year participants are expected to

- Develop awareness of oneself as a subject and take responsibility for their thoughts, feelings, and physical states.
- Receive feedback from other group members.
- Demonstrate commitment to the training group through regular attendance, and through adhering to the confidentiality guidelines that are intended to maintain the safety of the training group. As they recognize how breaches of confidentiality can vitiate the success of group work, group members come to expect confidentiality from each other, as do the group facilitators. Maintaining the boundaries of confidentiality, an aspect of professional ethics and a standard of the profession, is a condition for continuing in the training group.

Second-year participants are expected to continue to develop all three capacities cited above for first-year participants. In addition, they need to

- Demonstrate their ability to be relational, self-reflective, and willing to be interactive with other group members.

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 faculty of their readiness to advance. An assessment of their group experience figures prominently in the formal applications of those who apply to advance.

Third-year participants are expected to continue to assimilate and broaden their competencies and to continue to develop the capacities indicated above. As the communication networks developed in the training group become more diverse and extensive, a broader range of people are now within the student's emotional world. Third-year participants should demonstrate the ability to

- Work from a more sophisticated appreciation of the importance of empathy, respect and honesty in therapy.
- Demonstrate a clearer understanding of their impact on others in a therapeutic setting.
- Evidence a growing capacity for the competency of safe and effective use of self (SEUS).

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. In their formal applications to practice under supervision, the presentation and self-evaluation of group experience is a significant factor in their advancement. In faculty decisions to advance a student to the Clinical Phase and to actual practice under supervision, the assessment of readiness by their training group facilitators carries special weight.

Fourth-year participants are expected to deepen all competencies and capacities already noted. In addition they

- demonstrate a solid and reliable sense of themselves.
- are developing the capacity for self-analysis through self-reflection.
- have integrated the competencies as outlined above.

- have begun to develop a working understanding of transference and countertransference, and to engage with their countertransference feelings in their efforts to understand others.

At the end of the fourth and final year of group, students are typically engaged in their first full year of practice under supervision, with at least two years till graduation.

Upon completion of four years of the Psychotherapy Training Group, students should demonstrate the following:

- a solid grasp of fundamental psychodynamic theory and clinical application based on their own lived experience.
- a grounded understanding of their own reactive tendencies and the issues / circumstances that tend to evoke maladaptive defensive responses.
- safe and effective use of self by reflecting on countertransference and blind spots in order to discern the effect, both consciously and unconsciously, that their interactive behaviours have on others.
- increased capacity for attunement to others.
- increased capacity for self-regulation in the face of strong emotions.
- a willingness to explore and address blind spots with respect to gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, racialism, cultural diversity, physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and mental health.
- openness to the experience of others related to spirituality.

Although the Psychotherapy Training Group is a challenging component of the CTP program, students regularly acknowledge the transformative effect of their training group work on themselves and their work with clients.