

UK Council for Psychotherapy

Guidelines for Mental Health Familiarisation 2017



Mental Health Familiarisation is a required component of UKCP accredited trainings, this document must be read in conjunction with UKCP Standards of Education and Training.

Accreditation with UKCP is at Masters level or equivalent and the title of 'Psychotherapist' assumes some generic knowledge and understanding about how differing models of personhood and community understand mental wellbeing and mental illness. Whilst College-level SETs will have specific guidelines on how to approach curriculum content in this area, we expect that all UKCP accredited Psychotherapy trainings will embrace the following:

Awareness of diagnosis and treatment

This should include a working awareness of diagnosis and treatment in the context of UK mental health care services.

This should also include an understanding of:

- How mental illnesses are classified
- How to recognise more complex, significant or enduring mental health issues
- The reflexive awareness of context in diagnosis e.g. socio-economics, class, gender, disability, body type, age, culture, religion, race and sexuality
- How and when to refer on to appropriate professional agencies
- How to work in a client-centered way which safeguards the wellbeing of the client (and their dependents) and ensures that the psychotherapy a client receives forms part of an appropriate package of care.

A Range of Models of Assessment

Training Organisations should ensure that students and trainees are introduced to a range of appropriate models of assessment. Models of assessment should include (but not be restricted to) learning about how the medical model understands mental wellbeing and mental illness.

A medical model of assessment should include (as a minimum) awareness of the following in its curriculum:

- Assessment;
- The place of safeguarding in assessment;
- Diagnosis and classification of mental illness;
- Collaborative care: access to appropriate services;
- Recognising complex, significant and enduring mental illness;
- Awareness of current debates around evidence based research, practice, and treatment;
- How and when to refer.

Working within a social responsibility framework

Psychotherapists will require an understanding of their role within a system of restoring balance and justice towards better treatment of people with exceptional needs and prevention of additional mental health distress caused by normative social expectation and exclusion.

Opportunity for trainees to develop reflexivity in the social responsibility framework should include (as a minimum) relevant coverage of the following:

- Historically and culturally sited models of mental health, mental illness and mental health care.
- The influence of socio-economics, class, gender, disability, age, culture, religion, race and sexuality on the incidence, definition, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness and mental health.
- The intensifying impact of intersectionality (where a person belongs to more than one marginalised group).
- Familiarity with the role of minority community organisations and mental health advocacy organisations and how to engage with them.
- Practices for non-discriminatory service provision.

Working within a wider system of care

Psychotherapists will also require knowledge and understanding that equips them to work within or alongside other mental health services, with clients who have extraordinary needs and with family members of mental health service users.

Trainees and students should therefore be introduced to the wider contexts and considerations of mental health provision, in order to develop sensitive and reflexive practice of psychotherapy appropriate to the needs of people who experience greater mental and emotional distress.

This would include understanding and appreciation of:

- The impact on mental health service users and their families of diagnosis, stigma, normativity and minority experience
- The different professional and personal roles in mental health care
- The psychotherapist's role in provision of collaborative care
- The psychotherapist's role in provision of non-discriminatory service
- The role of medication (prescribed and non-prescribed), and its impact
- Ethical and legal considerations pertaining to the above, including appropriate familiarity with the Mental Health Act 2007 and the Equality Act 2010.

There is no one way of meeting these standards. Colleges and training organisations may choose how to fulfil these standards which may be via lectures, videos, a formal placement, or other methods.