

College of Family, Couple and Systemic Therapy (CFCST)

Standards of Education and Training 2017

Introduction

These Standards of Education and Training (SETs) have been prepared by the College of Family Couple and Systemic Therapy (CFCST). They should be read in conjunction with the UKCP Adult Standards of Training and Education and UKCP Child Sets (where relevant).

They also include some modality specific requirements, including those relating to work with children. College Registrants are trained to work with adults, couples, children and families.

Individual Training and/or Accrediting organisations within the CFCST must ensure that their Standards of Education and Training meet those set out in this document.

Registered members of CFCST undertake a range of systemic psychotherapy with individuals, couples and families. They work in a range of contexts, including the NHS, Social Care, Education, Youth Justice, Voluntary Organisations, as well as in Private Practice.

The SETs have been informed by the National Occupational Standards for Systemic Therapy laid out by Skills for Health, Competencies in Systemic Psychotherapy (Roth and Pilling), and Professional Occupational Standards published by UKCP.

The Regulatory Framework

1. General

1.1 CFCST training organisations must have an RPEL (recognition of prior experience and learning) policy. This is CFCST's preferred terminology for where the generic SETs refer to APL/APEL

2. Entry Requirements

2.1 Entry Requirements must include the following:

- Postgraduate level of competence. Candidates must have a first degree or equivalent (as assessed by formal RPEL procedures)
- Previous mental health or social care related professional qualification or equivalent
- Relevant experience (usually a minimum of 2 years post qualification) working with people in a responsible professional position in a mental health or social care related field

- Personal qualities compatible with the practice of psychotherapy
- Evidence of good command of written and spoken English (disability and equalities exceptions/adaptations to this requirement will always apply)

3. Diversity and Equality Requirements

- 3.1 Courses must have a policy for supporting students who fail to make progress on the course and who may not complete training.
- 3.2 Courses must have a policy for supporting students who require reasonable adjustment to allow access to training courses.
- 3.3 Courses must publish, and adhere to, clear policies relating to fitness for psychotherapy practice.

4. The minimum curriculum

4.1 Research

All trainings must include:

- 4.1.1 Knowledge and understanding of the evolving evidence base and effectiveness of Systemic Psychotherapy with different client groups and other therapeutic approaches;
- 4.1.2 Knowledge of manualised approach(es) and their advantages and limitations in clinical practice.
- 4.1.3 Ability to use routine outcome measures and other methods of eliciting and gathering feedback from clients.

4.2 Diversity and Equality

Based on the principles and provisions of the Equality Act 2010, all courses must ensure that students develop:

4.2.1. Knowledge:

- 4.2.1.1 A knowledge and awareness of the influence of the wider social context (including but not limited to gender, race, age, ability, culture, education and sexuality) on self and clients; (Social GRACES)
- 4.2.1.2 Understanding of the influence of wider contexts in shaping individuals and family relationships.
- 4.2.1.3 Understanding of the way in which power and difference affect relationships and the dynamics of therapy.

4.2.2. Skills:

- 4.2.2.1 Ability to recognise and address the impact of discriminatory practice and insensitivity to power differentials within therapeutic, service provision, training and supervisory contexts.

- 4.2.1.2 A working commitment to anti-oppressive and culturally sensitive practice taking into account differences between self of therapist and the client/family. (Social GRACES)
- 4.2.1.3 Ability to form effective collaborative relationships with clients across difference, whatever form this takes, and continuously nurture and attend to those relationships
- 4.2.1.4 Ability to demonstrate knowledge, sensitivity and understanding of general and specific issues and challenges that impact individuals, couples, families, organisations and communities due to inequalities and discrimination

4.3 Self-Awareness / Self-Reflexivity

Trainings must provide opportunities for students to develop their self-reflexivity through dedicated personal and professional development opportunities meeting the minimum requirements as follows:

- 4.3.1 Ability to reflect on the interface between personal and professional self and clinical practice and work to make them more available in therapy.
- 4.3.2 Ability to use supervision and peer consultation and discussion appropriately and effectively.
- 4.3.3 Understand and address any areas of difficulty or issues that trigger or resonate with unresolved personal issues.
- 4.3.4 Ability to take an active role in the development of personal learning and be able to identify areas of personal strength as well as areas for future personal development, including reflexive abilities about the self and the self in relationship.
- 4.3.5 Ability to recognise and think reflexively about the self we embody in therapy, our visible and invisible differences, the positions of power and privilege we inhabit.
- 4.3.6 Ability to demonstrate knowledge, sensitivity and understanding of general and specific issues and challenges that impact individuals, couples, families, organisations and communities due to inequalities and discrimination.

4.4 Safeguarding

The curriculum must address:

- 4.4.1 Ability to assess and manage the risk of harm to any family member and take appropriate action within the relevant Organisational Codes of Practice and Ethics.

4.5 Mental Health Familiarisation

The requirements below are in addition to the Guidelines for Mental Health Familiarisation 2017, which must be read in conjunction with the UKCP Standards of Education and Training:

- 4.5.1 Understanding of the wide range of ways in which clients present for help and an understanding of the different ways in which mental health challenges affect individuals and families.
- 4.5.2 An understanding of the limitations of Systemic Psychotherapy and personal competence and knowledge of appropriate referral pathways if these are required.
- 4.5.3 An ability to adapt clinical work with families to take account of mental health difficulties.
- 4.5.4 An ability to manage situations of high emotion, conflict and intensity in a way that is therapeutic to clients.

4.6 Ethics

- 4.6.1 Familiarity with the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of their accrediting, Training and clinical practice Organisation/s and how these relate to the UKCP and CFCST Ethical Principles and Code of professional Conduct
- 4.6.2 Ability to engage with the relevant codes of ethics and consideration of implications for professional practice.
- 4.6.3 Ability to reflect on ethical issues and dilemmas in supervision and elsewhere and to practice ethically.

4.7 Working with Children and Young People and Others within the Family System

Based on a sound understanding of child and adolescent development, family life cycle stages and transitions, and the dynamics of family and other systems, students must:

- 4.7.1 Have knowledge of common mental health presentations in children and adults and the evidence based approaches associated with those presentations including the use of medication and its effects.
- 4.7.2 Understand how mental health and other difficulties experienced by children and young people may manifest, influence and be influenced by the relational context within which they are seen.
- 4.7.3 Be able to include children and young people and those with limited cognitive ability in the session in a manner appropriate to their age and ability.
- 4.7.4 Be able to draw on a range of appropriate methods of communication including creativity, play, visual and other non-verbal techniques.

4.8 Working with Couples and Intimate Relationships

- 4.8.1 Knowledge of human development and sexuality at different stages of the life cycle.
- 4.8.2 Familiarity with and ability to select from a range of systemic theories and approaches in working with couples.
- 4.8.3 Understanding that couple intimacy may be expressed in different ways.

4.8.4 Awareness of when it is appropriate to facilitate couple conversations of intimacy and sexuality and when these should be referred elsewhere.

4.8.5 Ability to hold in mind and draw on a systemic understanding of differential power dynamics.

4.9 The wider social context

4.9.1 Understanding of the influence of wider contexts in shaping individual, couple and family relationships.

4.9.2 Ability to name and explore these influences when appropriate.

5. Supervised Practice of Systemic Psychotherapy

5.1 At Intermediate level students have the opportunity to apply systemic ideas to practice totalling 60 hours. This may be in a current work setting or placement. Courses must ensure that students have access to systemic supervision in the ratio of 1:6 hours systemic supervision to practice.

5.2 Students on qualifying level courses receive supervision 'live' within the context of a supervision group, in the presence of and observed by other students or other group members and the group's supervisor. Further clinical practice takes place in the student's own agency and / or occasionally in a placement for which retrospective systemic supervision may be provided.

5.3 Except where there are significant resource or access issues, the expectation is that supervision will be face-to face. Where this is not possible, the training organisation must ensure that secure and confidential platforms are used.

6. Staffing and Resource

6.1 Courses are encouraged to develop their teaching and delivery of training in innovative ways. Where this includes some element of distance / on-line learning consideration should be given as to how and when this is used within the course programme. It should not be used prior to the establishment of a face to face learning relationship nor replace face to face contact hours and direct teaching:

- Foundation level: minimum 60 hours
- Intermediate level: minimum 60 hours; 10 hours of clinical supervision
- Qualifying Level: 180 hours academic; 300 hours clinical.

6.2 Training Organisations which use on-line / distance learning must have a policy in place to govern the extent of its use and technologies to be used for its delivery.

6.3 Training Organisations must provide appropriate and proportionate academic and pastoral support for students, trainees and staff.

7. Assessment

7.1. Courses are required to appoint an external consultant, or examiner, who will oversee the standards of delivery and attainment of the course, examine fairness and equality issues, and moderate at least

some of the assessment material. The consultant, or examiner, must be suitably qualified and eligible for UKCP registration. The course must publish marking frameworks and give helpful feedback to students. At least a sample of work should be double marked.

- 7.2. Courses must have robust processes for quality assurance, demonstrating a range of processes for quality assurance and course development including data collection, student feedback, and external consultation or external examiner feedback. There must be a variety of assessments including a portfolio, presentation of clinical work, theoretical essays, case studies, research based assessment and a longer piece of work (seven thousand words and above).
- 7.3. Training organisations must make provision for preparing and training staff involved in assessment, and provide opportunities for regular organisational development of assessment skills.
- 7.4. Clinical standards of assessment must ensure that graduates are able to practice independently and provide safe, sensitive, ethical and effective therapy. In addition, a final report from the Course Supervisors should describe the level of practice of the student, as well as make clear recommendations about readiness for independent practice.
- 7.5. Assessment processes must encompass both summative and formative elements.
- 7.6. Courses must have robust processes for quality assurance in respect of standards for assessment.
- 7.7. Assessments of the theoretical and practice elements of training must reflect the requirements of the role of the systemic psychotherapist

8. Qualifications and Registration

- 8.1 Trainees must be given information about UKCP registration, career advice and CPD requirements. Systemic Psychotherapists applying for UKCP Registration for the first time are required to do this via an Accrediting OM. Subsequent registration may be sought directly to the UKCP via the CFCST.

References

- Fonagy, P (ed.) (undated) Digest of National Occupational Standards, UKCP.
- Roth, A & Pilling, S (2010) The Competency Framework, UCL.

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