

Training in psychotherapy for ST 1-3

The College has been giving considerable thought to ensuring that core trainees get sufficient experience of psychological treatments to be able to prescribe them accurately, evaluate their effects intelligently and, where appropriate deliver them competently. The relevant competencies are now outlined in the [curriculum](#) which has been revised and modernised in an important and radical overhaul. The [syllabus for the exam](#) has also been updated and modernised and the CASC section of the exam will henceforward contain clinical stations that reflect these revisions and updates.

There has been debate about the best and most practical way for trainees to obtain the relevant competencies and responsibility for the delivery of the curriculum and the progression of trainees through the ARCP process lies in the hands of the Postgraduate Schools of Psychiatry. The college has however issued [guidance](#) to trainees, trainers and schools. Each school has access to a regional representative in psychotherapy and each trust will have a psychotherapy tutor who can assist with the practical implementation of the requirements.

But what should you do?

If you are a trainee

You should make sure that your portfolio contains evidence of the competencies you have obtained in psychological treatments. As a basic minimum you should aim to get experience of treating, under supervision, two or more patients using basic psychological techniques. One of these treatments should be a brief treatment and the other a longer term treatment. You should attend a case based discussion group in your trust and talk about your work in routine psychiatric practice from a psychological perspective. You should read the exam syllabus section on psychotherapy and study the relevant topics.

If you are trainee's consultant

You should talk about psychotherapy training and experience with your trainee. Although you might not credit it in yourself you probably have considerable experience of supportive treatments that you have delivered over the years and you might feel you could supervise a trainee delivering (for example a brief psychoeducational or supportive intervention for a psychotic patient). Helping your trainee negotiate time to attend a case based discussion group and to undertake psychological treatments would also be important.

If you are an educational supervisor

You should aim to track the trainee's acquisition of competencies in this area as you would in any area however it will be particularly important to use your place as an enduring mentor for the trainee to allow an overview of the progress that is being made towards the achievement of competencies in this area as the trainee progresses through successive jobs. Often individual placements offer specific opportunities for gaining the required psychotherapy experiences (for example a child and adolescent job may offer the opportunity for doing some family therapy) in terms of range of modalities and of patients treated. Trainees often also require help to negotiate time to see patients and attend supervision as they balance service requirements, rota difficulties and training needs.

If you are a tutor

If you are the tutor locally for a scheme you should be able to count on the support and advice of a psychotherapy tutor in each trust. Furthermore there should be a psychotherapy representative on the Board of the School of Psychiatry that commissions your trust for training. Lastly each region has a psychotherapy representative who is appointed by the college to support the regional advisor. These three people are there to advise and assist you in fulfilling the requirement for trainees to attain competencies in psychotherapy. You should consult with them to ensure trainees have access to suitable opportunities for psychotherapy training and that they are gaining appropriate competencies and providing evidence that they have done so in their portfolios. If your trust has not yet appointed a psychotherapy tutor or your School of Psychiatry doesn't have a representative for psychotherapy on it then you would help us and yourself to a very great extent by reporting this fact to your regional representative for psychotherapy who may be able to begin a process that will rectify the situation.

If you are a Head of School

You could help gain evidence of how good your school is in training core trainees in psychotherapy by cascading down to trainees the survey recently launched by Dr Hugo De Waal which aims to assess the current state of play in relation to psychotherapy training. We will try to conduct this survey on a regular basis to monitor and feedback the national state of play in relation to these competencies. You could also get help from me directly if you would like support, advice, guidance or any other kind of help in developing psychotherapy training by emailing me at Chess.Denman@cpft.nhs.uk.