



AFT

Continuing Professional Development Policy

Policy Document

January 2008

Introduction

The UKCP document, Continuing Professional Development: Principles and Requirements for Member Organisations, states, 'It is now widely accepted in the majority of professions that there is a need for Continuing Professional Development ... One of the central aims of the UKCP is to ensure the protection of the public. One way of achieving this is by the continuing maintenance and improvement of standards of practice.'

Accordingly the UKCP requires all its Member Organisations (MOs) to formulate and implement a CPD policy. The UKCP also expects registrants to take full responsibility for the continuing development of their own practice and to provide evidence of this as required by their member organisation.

The Memorandum of Association of the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice in the UK (AFT) states, 'The Association's objects are to benefit the public by the promotion by all available means of the scientific study, practice, research and teaching of family therapy ...'

AFT's Code of Ethics and Practice states, under Professional Conduct of the Therapist: 'You should ensure that you maintain your level of competence through continuing training/continuing professional development.'

CPD Guidelines

The Family, Couple, Sexual and Systemic Therapy (FCSST) Section of UKCP has produced a document entitled CPD Guidelines in which a number of important principles are laid down. They are:

i. General principles

- The protection of the public is paramount.
- There should be a flexible approach to CPD so that, for example, the development of skills in clinical supervision, teaching, research and management all need to be seen as valid.
- Psychotherapists have a personal responsibility to ensure that they continue their professional development in a meaningful way. They should have a personal CPD plan that is regularly reviewed.

The UKCP Document also includes the following principles, which AFT has incorporated into its own policy:

- CPD policies should seek to build on the model of reflection on practice that is central to all psychotherapies.

- Professional development involves the active reflection on experience in a way that allows the individual practitioner to specify what has been learned or reconfirmed.
- CPD policies need to allow for individual practitioners to develop in a variety of ways e.g. diversifying their practice to include models that lie outside their original training.

ii. Specific principles

Specific principles that apply to psychotherapists registered in the FCSST Section are:

- The requirement to attend to CPD applies to all practising psychotherapists.
- There will be additional requirements for psychotherapists in the first three years of postqualifying practice. This is in recognition of the value of guidance in the early years of practice. Part of this guidance will be to support the development of an effective approach to CPD.
- For psychotherapists with more than three years of post qualifying experience, CPD should be assessed over a three-year cycle. This takes account of the occasional need to have 'lean times' due to illness, pregnancy or other life events.
- Psychotherapists with more than three years of post-qualifying practice may count their contributions to the profession in the form of committee membership as part of their personal CPD plan, though no more than 10%.
- Supervision, i.e. clinical supervision (sometimes referred to as consultation), may be individual, group or team. Live supervision and the use of videotape is especially valued.
- The FCSST Section recognises the creative possibilities of other forms of supervision as technological advances are taking place and new methods are evolving e.g. electronically communicated forms of supervision and video-conferencing.

The FCSST document then outlines specific minimum requirements for consultation/supervision, attendance at training events and other ways of keeping up with developments in the field. These requirements have been incorporated in AFT's own policy.

Specific Minimum Requirements

AFT agrees that there should be additional CPD requirements for practitioners in the early years of post-qualifying practice,

especially now that UKCP require that practitioners should be eligible for registration as soon as they have successfully completed a qualifying training course.

The following requirements are considered to be the minimum necessary to ensure continued professional development appropriate to the practice of family therapy, together with an acceptable measure of protection for the public. In exceptional circumstances individuals may be unable to fulfil the requirements in the way that they are set out. Disability or geographical isolation could be reasons for this. Such an individual must contact the Registration Committee of AFT so that a CPD plan equivalent to that laid out in this document can be agreed.

Practice Requirements

- For the first 3 years after qualifying it is expected that the minimum clinical practice would be 12 hours per month (this would be face to face hours with clients, not in partially reflecting teams.)
- After 3 years the minimum requirement would be 8 hours per month averaged over a 3 year period.
- After 10 years, by agreement with the Registration Committee, registrants who have retired from clinical practice, may remain on the register whilst only supervising other registrants.

Supervision

- For the first three years post-qualification, family therapists must have supervision for a minimum of one and a half hours per month. This would usually be face-to-face and from a supervisor who is registered with the FCSST Section of UKCP. Supervision with someone who has achieved approved supervisor status with AFT is particularly recommended.
- After three years of post-qualified practice, family therapists are required to undertake a minimum of twelve hours of supervision per year. While this would usually take place monthly, the emphasis on flexibility means that supervision could be at less frequent intervals, but at no greater interval than two months. Some of this supervision may be with practitioners from another psychotherapy modality but the greater proportion should be from a supervisor registered with the FCSST Section of UKCP.
- When supervision is conducted in a group setting there must be sufficient time for all group members to present and receive supervision to their work. Peer supervision groups should have an annual consultation from an appropriate outside person (usually a registered supervisor with AFT and/or an experienced systemic therapist registered with UKCP in the Family Couple Sexual and Systemic Therapy Section). This consultation should include a consultation to the process of the group. If the peer supervision is additional to the required supervision then the consultation is not a requirement. For the first three years following registration peer supervision can not take the place of the basic requirement.

Attendance at workshops and other training events

- The minimum requirement for attendance at training events is 18 hours. Two thirds of this should be systemic in nature. This training might involve attending a conference or participating in a workshop or other specific training event. The practitioner should be able to demonstrate the relevance of this training to his practice and development.

Keeping up-to-date with developments in the field

There are a variety of ways of doing this but there is an expectation that family therapists, as professional people, will wish to keep abreast of current developments in the field.

- Reading is a prerequisite, as is attendance at training events (as outlined above).
- Many therapists will wish to evaluate their work or take part in research or audit activity.
- AFT would wish to encourage practitioners who seek to develop skills in clinical supervision or teaching.
- Professionalisation and the development of family therapy posts, e.g. in the NHS, bring with it an expectation of involvement in management processes within their clinical directorate or department.
- Family therapists may wish to contribute directly to the work of this Association or of another related organisation through membership of a committee.
- The balance between these disparate activities needs to be considered carefully but in general each practitioner must be able to demonstrate that involvement in wider professional activity such as committee membership has not been at the cost of clinical CPD, i.e. supervision and training.

Further training

AFT recognises that individuals develop in a variety of ways. Some family therapists may wish to undertake further training in a different psychotherapeutic modality in order to enrich their work by broadening their practice.

Annual re-registration

- Each year all family therapists registered with the FCSST Section of UKCP via AFT are required to complete a renewal form and declare any complaints against their practice.
- Every 3 years practitioners will be asked to provide a personal CPD statement describing how they have developed during that period and a plan outlining how they wish to move on in the future. They will need to detail the extent of their practice, their current arrangements for supervision and the way they have attended to their professional development during the period. They will also be asked to provide evidence of a CRB check and insurance arrangements.
- Practitioners may be asked to provide additional CPD evidence at the discretion of the Registration Committee.

The Chair of the Professional Affairs Committee (PAC) welcomes general feedback and suggestions on Information Sheets and can be contacted via: Sue Kennedy, AFT Executive Officer, 7 Executive Suite, St James Court, Wilderspool Causeway, Warrington WA4 6PS. Tel: 01925 444414. Email: s.kennedy@aft.org.uk

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