

UKATA policy regarding psychotherapy trainees' personal therapy

Introduction

One of the main roles of UKATA Training, Accreditation and Standards Committee (TASC) is to ensure UKATA members who are training to become psychotherapists can meet the UKCP's requirements for registration. One aspect of the training journey is for trainees to meet the UKCP requirements for personal therapy during training.

UKCP Requirements for Trainees Personal Therapy.

UKATA is part of the Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy College of UKCP (HIPC), and HIPC makes the following requirements of trainees' personal therapy in their current Standards of Education and Training:

C3 vii)

160 hours of personal therapy consistent with the training approach

C.8

Candidates must have an experience of psychotherapy congruent with the psychotherapy in which they are in training, a minimum of 40 hours per year for four years, and normally be in psychotherapy throughout their training. This personal psychotherapy must normally be undergone with a UKCP registered psychotherapist, or equivalent.

Appendix 1: Definition: Therapy

This would normally consist of 160 personal therapy hours weekly throughout training, over at least four years, with not less than 40 hours per year. Where the model is group therapy, the total hours recommended may be different according to the approach.

Broadly, UKATA TASC interprets this so that our trainees are expected, as a minimum, to have four, twelve-month periods during their training, in which they can evidence they have experienced at least 40 hours of personal therapy in an on-going therapy relationship with a therapist who is UKCP registered. We consider that the period of training begins with initial enrolment at the RTE and concludes when the trainee successfully registers with UKCP.

What context of the psychotherapy can count towards those hours?

In applying UKCP requirements, TASC expects that the context of the psychotherapy that a trainee experiences is congruent with the context in which they have been trained to practice, in which they are gaining experience of practice, and intend to practice. These contexts would usually be 1:1 personal psychotherapy, couples, group, or family psychotherapy, where the therapist is a UKCP registered psychotherapist.

As TA is a systemic psychotherapy approach, the context of the psychotherapy that can be allowed to count towards these four periods of forty hours per year will be specified in each individual RTE's training handbook – with the RTE's rationale and philosophy for this.

Up to 12 hours of any forty-hour period could also include, if an RTE handbook's rationale allows, hours accrued in a one-off 'therapy marathon' experience (usually running over two or three days) with a UKCP registered psychotherapist. It is recommended that trainees considering this option (where available) use their supervision and on-going personal therapy to look at any implications of this choice to any pre-existing therapy relationship.

Training rationale

The three interrelated training aims of trainees' personal therapy are:

- a. To enable trainees to address their own script issues that could interfere with the effectiveness of their work with clients (the counter-transferential purpose).
- b. To enable the grounding of theory and therapeutic methods via direct experience of the type of therapy in which trainees are being trained (the didactic/learning purpose).
- c. To enhance trainees' empathic awareness of what it's like to be a client in the type of therapy in which trainees are being trained (the empathic purpose).

Practical implications

- 1) Trainees (i.e. all students who have not yet successfully completed their UKATA Diploma, UKCP registration, or CTA) are required to demonstrate a committed and on-going engagement with the process of their own personal therapy, within a well-established therapeutic relationship, and one that is congruent with the type, and frequency of that in which they are being trained and intend to practice.
- 2) Specifically this should entail regular, individual and/or small group (maximum 8 members) therapy (this can include couples or family therapy). This enables an ongoing integration of personal therapy with the trainee's training, practice and supervision throughout training.
- 3) UKATA recommends that trainee's personal therapy should be with a CTA (P) psychotherapist who is UKCP registered, unless there are pragmatic reasons that make this difficult, e.g. geographical availability, in which case it should be with a UKCP Registered psychotherapist.
- 4) Dual relationships that involve concurrently providing therapy, and training or supervision, should be avoided.
- 5) There may be mitigating circumstances in which the trainee, in consultation with their supervisor or trainer, needs to vary these requirements. The trainee can make an application for a variance to the usual procedures due to mitigating circumstances, using the process outlined on the UKATA website (see below).

Why personal therapy hours accrued before beginning training fall outside these requirements.

The UKCP requirements above are clear that trainees' personal therapy hours are accrued during the period of their training. In applying these requirements TASC does not, in anyway, discount the value of the psychotherapy work trainees might have undertaken prior to beginning training; we recognise it is simply different to personal therapy accrued during training.

UKATA's Registered Training Establishments (RTEs) have the power to account for the training and personal therapy hours a trainee might have accrued whilst enrolled on a different level 7 psychotherapy training prior to starting at the RTE. This process is called the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and RTEs can do this for up to 50% of the course requirements of the UKATA approved TA training that leads to UKCP registration.

When RTEs do this they will, at the beginning of the course, provide the trainee with a letter outlining the process of APL that has been undertaken, and how many training and personal therapy hours are being approved under the APL. This should be placed in a trainee's portfolio for UKCP registration, along with evidence of the prior training and personal therapy hours.

The UKCP requirements mean that RTEs cannot use the APL process to allow personal therapy hours accrued before starting at the RTE unless they were part of another level 7 psychotherapy training course.

Please Note: Any discussions about Accreditation of Prior Learning requirements will need to take place with the RTE training provider and not with TASC. Any supporting APL documentation will need to be provided by the RTE training provider and will not be provided by TASC directly.

Variances due to mitigating circumstances

TASC administers a 'variance' process to consider experiences of trainees that might fall outside the normal process expected by UKCP. These variances usually come in two categories:

1. Where a trainee wishes to work with a therapist who is not UKCP registered then we expect them to apply in advance to TASC for a variance – permission to work with a psychotherapist that TASC considers is equivalent to a UKCP registered psychotherapist.
2. Where there are significant mitigating circumstances that have interrupted a trainee's goal of achieving 40 hours of personal therapy in a twelve-month period (e.g. bereavement, ill-health etc), the trainee can also apply promptly for a variance decision from TASC to enable some other configuration of their personal therapy hours to be considered to meet the UKCP requirements.



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TASC usually handles around 20-30 such requests for equivalency and variance under significant mitigating circumstances each year; and we aim to meet these compassionately whilst maintaining rigorous standards.

UKATA TASC July 2024