



Training Curriculum for ISTFP Teachers & Supervisors

The ISTFP Training and Education Committee

1. Introduction

This curriculum prepares ISTFP therapists to become teachers and supervisors. The status quo is defined as “Level E” within the latest version of the ISTFP levels of certification document. Applicants must be ISTFP members in good standing with their membership dues.

The ISTFP will offer a training curriculum that has to be completed by every candidate before taking the certification exam for becoming an ISTFP teacher & supervisor. The curriculum consists of four parts: (1) a theoretical course, (2) reading of selected books and papers, (3) co-teaching, (4) co-supervision.

2. Application procedure

Applicants must be certified ISTFP therapists and current members of the ISTFP.

Becoming an ISTFP Teacher & Supervisor is not a “natural next career step” for every TFP therapist. This pathway is intended for members of our community who remain actively engaged in TFP and continue treating patients with TFP under regular supervision for at least two years after passing the therapist certification examination. A strong theoretical and didactic interest in TFP is also an important requirement for becoming a Teacher & Supervisor.

Acceptance into the training curriculum is based on input from the candidate’s regional group and previous supervisors, as well as approval by the ISTFP Training & Education Committee.

The formal procedure for being accepted as a candidate is as follows:

- (1) Applicants must first obtain certification as TFP therapists. Following certification, they must continue treating patients with TFP under regular supervision for at least two years before applying to the Teacher & Supervisor training curriculum. During this period, the training case should be treated in person. Online treatment may be accepted only when external circumstances make in-person treatment impossible. This decision must be made in consultation with the candidate’s supervisor. Applicants become eligible to apply two years after passing the TFP therapist certification examination.

- (2) Once eligible, the candidate must submit a formal application to the Chair(s) of the ISTFP Training & Education (T&E) Committee. The application may be initiated in one of three ways: the candidate may be proposed by their regional TFP group, recommended by a previous supervisor, or apply on their own initiative through self-nomination. Regardless of how the application is initiated, the formal application must be submitted to the T&E Committee for consideration.
- (3) The application will be evaluated by the chair(s) of the T & E committee, the former supervisor(s) of the applicant, and the chair of the regional group. A written statement about the candidate's expertise and suitability to become a TFP teacher & supervisor should be given by the former supervisors as well as the chair of the regional group (these persons should feel responsible for maintaining high quality standards).
- (4) The T&E committee decides about the acceptance of the applicant.

3. Training, Mentorship, and Supervision

The candidate will join the open online training group for the theoretical and didactic component of the curriculum. At the same time, the candidate will be assigned a mentor, i.e., an experienced ISTFP teacher & supervisor, who will either accept the candidate as a co-teacher and co-supervisor him-/herself or will help to find an adequate senior teacher and supervisor for these parts of the training. The mentor will be the key person to support the development of the candidate and give regular feedback about the process.

4. Qualification of teaching staff

Teaching staff must be experienced ISTFP Teachers & Supervisors with at least five years of continuous experience treating patients with TFP and at least five years of experience providing individual and/or group supervision to TFP therapists. Senior teaching staff will be selected by the ISTFP Training & Education (T&E) Committee. The Chair of the T&E Committee will maintain an up-to-date list of approved senior teaching staff.

5. Theoretical training

The theoretical training may be offered locally and in person when a sufficient number of senior teaching staff members are available. In general, however, the training will be offered online to allow candidates from different regions to participate. The primary language of instruction will be English. Training curricula may also be offered in other languages, such as Spanish or German, when there is a sufficient number of candidates.

The theoretical training consists of 40 units of 45 minutes each, for a total of 30 hours.

The content of the theoretical training will be the following:

- a. Case formulation

- syndromal diagnosis
 - structural diagnosis
 - transferential diagnosis
 - disclosure of diagnosis
- b. The supervisory process in TFP
- pilot's list
 - dealing with external reality
 - diagnosis and treatment goals
 - foci within the micro- and macroprocess
 - treatment contract and its violation
 - technical neutrality and deviations from it
 - countertransference use and analysis
 - use of the adherence and competence checklist
 - selection of a focus
 - focusing affect and dyad – affect dominance and priority of interventions
 - typical transference patterns (“glossary”)
 - empathic perspective to role reversal“ tempo and timing
 - preparatory interventions before an interpretation is given
 - handling of special situations: emergencies, acting out
 - remote supervision
 - glossary of prototypical transference patterns
 - using group processes (parallel process)
 - Philipp Martius' “Circular Model”
- c. General psychoanalytic theory of supervision including group processes/ parallel process, psychoanalytic listening and how to teach this.
- Kernberg's papers on supervision
 - Balint's group model
 - Bion's concepts of groups
- d. Didactics of teaching TFP and co-supervision
- Ethical aspects: informed consent, video recording, storing, and presentation (in person vs. online), data protection
 - contents, slides and materials
 - role play
 - didactic methods
- e. Specificities of TFP-A supervision
- f. Introductory STIPO-R training

6. Readings

a. Obligatory readings

Balint M (1954): Training general practitioners in psychotherapy. *British Medical Journal* 1(4854): 115–120

Bion W (1961/2018): Experiences in groups. Complete Works, volume IV. New York: Routledge, p. 95-204.

Doering S, Schneider-Heine A, Lohmer M (2022). Outline of the *D-A-CH Model* of TFP Supervision. Vienna & Munich: unpublished manuscript.

Kernberg, O. F. (2010). Psychoanalytic supervision: The supervisor's tasks. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 79(3), 603-627.

Kernberg, O. F. (2019). Reflections on supervision. *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79(3), 265-283.

Kernberg OF, Yeomans F (2021): Guide to supervision. New York: Personality Disorders Institute, unpublished manuscript.

Yeomans FE, Clarkin JF, Kernberg OF: Transference-Focused Psychotherapy for Borderline Personality Disorder: A Clinical Guide. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Publishing: 2015

b. Recommended reading

A separate list will be provided.

7. Co-teaching

Co-teaching must begin after the candidate has been formally admitted to the T&S Curriculum.

Ideally, candidates should participate as co-teachers throughout an entire TFP training curriculum. A minimum of 30 units of 45 minutes each is required. Of these, at least 10 units must be actively taught by the candidate in the presence of a senior teacher.

For the purpose of co-teaching, a senior teacher is an ISTFP-certified Teacher & Supervisor with at least three years of experience teaching TFP.

8. Co-supervision

Co-supervision must begin after the candidate has been formally admitted to the T&S Curriculum.

Participation as co-supervisor in a TFP supervision group with a senior supervisor for at least one year (at least 10 x 2 units) with stepwise taking over more responsibility. This can be done in person or as part of an online supervision group.

The senior supervisor must have at least three years of experience as a TFP supervisor.

9. Treatment of a case

A second case (different from the one treated during the training for becoming a TFP therapist) should be treated by the candidate with TFP twice per week with a preference for face-to-face treatment for at least two years with at least monthly

supervision (individual or group). **Two different supervisors should supervise the case for approximately one year each.**

10. Examination

After all elements of the training have been completed, candidates complete the form for application for the certification exam and send it to the chair of the T&E committee. He/she determines two certifiers either regionally or at an ISTFP conference in person or online.

The certifiers have to be members of the ISTFP board of certifiers and must not have been a supervisor, mentor, or senior teacher during the co-teaching.

Procedure (according to the standard procedure of the ISTFP T&E Committee):

The candidate will conduct a live supervision of a TFP therapist who presents a clinical case, including a recent video-recorded session. During the supervision, the candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to address and discuss both theoretical and technical aspects of the case. (≈ 80 minutes)

The examiners observe and may ask questions, the TFP concepts as well as obligatory reading can also be part of the examination.

A theoretical and practical expertise in supervision is expected from the candidates.

Following successful completion of the certification exam, candidates may request their ISTFP Teacher & Supervisor certificate. Information on how to request the certificate is available on the ISTFP website: <https://istfp.org/training/levels-of-certification-in-tfp/tfp-therapist-certificates/>.

11. Costs

The costs for the theoretical training are € 1,000, this amount might be reduced, if a larger group of candidates participate.

The costs for 20 supervisory sessions – preferably in a group, individual supervision is also possible. Co-supervision and co-teaching are free, but usually no fee will be paid to the candidate.

The cost for the examination is €300, with €150 paid to each of the two certifiers.