

THE FOCUSING TRAINER & PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

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The Focusing Trainer & Practitioner Certification Program¹ is a specialized mentored training. The program is designed to help participants develop aptitudes and skills important in:

- Teaching Focusing to others in informal as well as professional settings
- Facilitating one-one Guided Focusing sessions either as stand-alone Focusing sessions or to complement existing professional skills.
- Deepen and expand the participant's competence and confidence in Focusing.

To me the practice and teaching of Focusing is an art. My view is that an atmosphere of safety and respect is paramount not just in the practice of Focusing, but also in the process of learning, growing, and healing. This, combined with authenticity and a sense of humor are elements that I see as an essential part of the training.

Every student has a unique background, skills, and learning needs. Recognizing this, my goal is to offer a training program that will meet your individual needs. As such, the process is designed so that you might progress at a pace that is comfortable for you. Together we will tailor a learning plan and project that works for you.

Prerequisites to enter Certification program

Course Work

The Focusing Basics and Advanced Focusing Training² (equivalent to Levels 1-4 of Inner Relationship Focusing Training.) A minimum of 3 of these Levels are to be taken in a group setting, either on the phone or in person. Courses taught by Ruth are taught in eight sessions of 2 ½ hours each. Reading and practice assignments are provided for each class session. Both in-person and video-conference class sizes are limited to a maximum of eight-ten students per class to optimize learning. Every class includes both didactic and experiential components.

¹ Specific training and requirements for becoming a Certified Focusing Trainer may differ between Certifying Coordinators (CC). This plan summarizes the program for certification by Ruth Hirsch.

² See Appendix A for a summary of Ruth's Core Focusing Training program.

Statement of motivation and intention

In addition to the required course work as described above, candidates for the Training Program are asked to submit a Focusing-oriented statement of their motivations, intentions, and expectations for the program. This statement can be informal; the intention is to take some time to check in with yourself about what you're wanting and hoping for through participating in the program.

Overview of the Certification Program³

The training program is based on a blend of content and skills. A list of the recommended skills and objectives for certification are included in Appendix B. In addition to these competencies, you are welcome to add more content/skills that you would like to accomplish. A key part of the program is your self-assessment of your progress in gaining these skills as well as your readiness for becoming a Focusing trainer. Please see below for more on the self-assessment process. Following are descriptions of the various components of the program.

Mentor(s)

Ruth will be your primary mentor. If desired, one or more additional mentors may also be selected by the trainee. The role of the mentor(s) is to support your process of training by being present for your self-assessments and by being available for practical questions and emotional support between the self-assessments. If a second mentor is chosen, each mentor may also support your relationship with the other mentor. Should you and either mentor encounter issues between you that need to be worked out, the other mentor will support the working out of the issues.

Partnership

A regular Focusing Partnership that meets at least once a week, either by phone, online, or in person is required for the duration of the trainer-in-training period.

Self-Assessments

As noted above, a key part of the training process is self-assessment. The trainee will have at least three self-assessment sessions with the mentor(s). A possible self-assessment format is provided in Appendix C. The self-assessments may be done online, by telephone, or in person. The first session will be at the beginning of the training, the second in the middle, and the third or final session at the end, as a completion to the training.

³ Requirements and fees are occasionally reviewed and may change. Please contact [Ruth](#) directly for latest information.

Each self-assessment session begins with the trainee focusing on issues related to the trainee's sense of their progress as a trainer-in-training, and may include focusing on questions such as "How am I feeling now about Focusing?" "What are my strengths?" "Where do I need/want to grow?" "What support do I need?" The mentor listens to your Focusing, and offers guiding suggestions if asked. Following the Focusing time, the mentor responds from her felt sense in a Focusing way.

The self-assessment is not an evaluation of you by your mentor(s). It is truly a self-assessment, which is a radically different educational form. In the process, trainees find that they actually experience in a bodily way their growing readiness to teach Focusing. Thus, rather than being told from outside that you are ready, this process allows you to feel it from the inside.

The completion of the training is determined by a consensus process between you and your mentor(s). Consensus means that the felt senses of all are respected, heard and trusted, until a shared result emerges. The primary judge of your readiness is you and your felt sense. The entire process generally takes about a year after completion of the core courses.

Supervision/ Mentoring

Regular supervisory sessions to help to develop and refine personal Focusing and personal/professional facilitation skills are recommended as follows: Twice a month for a minimum of 9 months. Some possibilities for mentoring sessions may include:

- input on learning to facilitate Focusing sessions for others;
- discussions related to teaching Focusing to a group;
- guided Focusing sessions to address issues in your own life;
- answering questions you might have related to Focusing.

The fees for these sessions are set at a special rate for Program trainees. Currently, the fee is \$120 per 50 minute session when purchased in packages of four sessions each.

Keeping a log of activities

The intention of keeping a log is to give you and your mentor(s) a sense of your progress during the training. The log might include (but not be limited to):

- Focusing-related books/articles read
- Sessions facilitated, either as part of your existing work or stand-alone Focusing sessions
- Challenges you encountered, and questions for supervision
- Insights gained as a result of sitting in on classes, supervision sessions, your own Focusing sessions

Practicum in introducing Focusing in one-one setting

The trainee needs to find 3-4 people who haven't done Focusing before, and then introduce them to Focusing. This will include an introduction to Focusing and one or two Guided Focusing sessions. The trainee will record the sessions; write up a transcript of one 10-minute segment from each session; compose questions that arise for the trainee during and after the session. The transcripts and questions will then be discussed at Supervisory sessions.

Apprenticeship

This includes two major components: The first is active observation of the mentor's Focusing Basics and Intermediate-Advanced Courses, which may include class participation and/or partnering with participants. These courses can be either regularly scheduled courses or online or in-person courses scheduled specifically for a specific group or geographic area. There is no additional charge for participating in these classes.

The other component is a requirement that the trainee plan a curriculum and teach at least one Focusing Level One training (the equivalent of the first half of the Focusing Basics Program) for 3-5 participants. This course will be offered for a nominal fee, with participants understanding that the trainee is not yet a Certified Trainer. The primary mentor will provide support and supervision for this training.

Project

Each trainee will complete an experientially based project related to Focusing in an area in which the trainee has a strong interest and/or enthusiasm. An example of a project might include writing an essay about the teaching or practice of Focusing with respect to a particular subset of the population (i.e. Focusing and visual arts, focusing and business, focusing and healing); writing a review of literature pertaining to Focusing; or another subject of the trainee's choosing.

It is suggested that a draft of this project be submitted to the mentor(s) for feedback at least two months prior to anticipated certification to allow time for the mentor(s) to offer feedback and for the trainee to finalize the project.

Required Reading⁴

Eugene Gendlin: Focusing (1978); Three Assertions about the Body (1993); Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy (1996).

⁴ Additional reading may be suggested, depending on the trainee's particular interests.

Ruth Hirsch: Training Manuals (4th edition), Focusing Basics and Intermediate – Advanced Training. [In addition to the main text, please read all the optional articles that are included in the manuals.]

TIFI Diversity statement: http://www.focusing.org/about_us.htm#diversity

Ethical considerations when working with individuals and groups

These will be presented in written form.

Introduction to the philosophy behind Focusing and some of approaches to Focusing

- The Philosophy of the Implicit and The Process Model
- Interactive Focusing
- FOT– Focusing Oriented Psychotherapy
- Focusing with Dreams
- TAE

Membership in The International Focusing Institute is required from the time a trainee becomes a Trainer-in-training. The current fee for membership as a trainer-in-training is \$75/year for trainees in the U.S. To join, please go to

https://www.focusing.org/eShop/store_coordinator.asp?fee_type=DUES17-TNT

Where it asks for your Certifying Coordinator, put Ruth Hirsch.

Reduced rates are available for some other countries. For more information about the rate where you live, please be in touch with The International Focusing Institute: elizabeth@focusing.org

Participation in International or Community-level Focusing gathering

You will be encouraged to participate in at least one Focusing gathering in order to experience other Focusing teachers and to meet other Focusers. This could include a scheduled conference, summer school, or local gathering. For those unable to do this in person, online offerings are also available.

Becoming Certified

At or near the completion of your training you have the choice of either attending the Certification weeklong⁵ in New York, or paying \$500 to The International Focusing Institute (TIFI) in lieu of the weeklong training. The philosophy is that your work with your mentor is complete training in itself, and TIFI receives a fee, either directly or from the weeklong workshop, for your certification. The weeklong is a valuable experience, both professionally and personally. Currently it is given once a year, in the late summer or early autumn, in a retreat center outside New York City.

What Certification Means

When you have completed the entire process, you may call yourself a Certified Focusing Trainer. As long as you remain a member of TIFI, your name and contact information will be listed in the Directory published by the Institute. For a small additional fee you may also have your name and contact information listed on TIFI's web site.

Fees

There is an initial fee of \$985 to the primary mentor, payable at the start of the program. This includes the fees for the three self-assessment sessions and is also an overall fee for "shepherding" your training. As such it also includes:

- Mentoring in relation to email correspondence related to the development and teaching of your first Focusing Basics course (equivalent to Level One);
- Mentoring in relation to observing your mentor's teaching
- Supervision of your Focusing Project.

Other expected costs include recommended supervision and individual Focusing sessions (discounted for Trainers-in-training.) If purchased at the discounted package rate, the fee for each session is \$120. For the recommended 18 sessions (twice a month for a minimum of 9 months) the cost is \$2160.

The fee for membership in TIFI as a Trainer-in-Training is \$75 per year from the beginning of your training. Reduced fee membership of \$50 per year is available for Israeli trainees and trainees from some other countries. (For prospective trainees from other countries, please contact The International Focusing Institute at elizabeth@focusing.org for information about whether

⁵ Prior to 1995, certification was only possible by participating in person in the weeklong workshop after working with a mentor. Since 1995, trainers-in-training have had the additional option of working with a Certifying Coordinator and paying \$500 to TIFI in lieu of attending the weeklong. A full list of Certifying Coordinators is available from TIFI.

there is a reduced fee membership for your country.) Once you become certified, the membership fee will be \$165/year for trainers in the U.S.

If the trainee opts to take the optional Certification Weeklong offered by the International Focusing Institute, there is the cost of the weeklong. Alternatively there is a final payment of \$500 to TIFI. If you opt to pay the \$500 fee and then wish at a later date to participate in the weeklong, \$500 will be deducted from the fee for the weeklong.

Is this program right for you?

The emphasis in this program is essentially to deepen your own Focusing practice and to gain competence in facilitating and teaching Focusing to others. While most trainees are professionals in coaching, psychotherapy, and bodywork fields, the training is also appropriate for generalists.

Next Steps

If this program resonates for you, or if you have further questions about the program, please be in touch with Ruth at ruth@ruthhirsch.com. If the program feels like a fit, the next step will be for us to find a time to have a brief talk via Zoom about your goals and any other questions that you might have. I look forward to hearing from you!

Appendix A

SUMMARY: CORE FOCUSING TRAINING PROGRAM⁶

FOCUSING BASICS

Part One: The Basics

- Attaining a basic understanding of Focusing, including the ability to Focus alone (self-guiding), and with a partner, and the ability to be a listener to another Focuser.

It is the goal that by the end of the course participants will be able to Focus either with a partner or on their own.

Part Two: Advanced Listening and Beginning Guiding

- Enhancing competence in self-guiding, learning advanced listening techniques, and a few guiding techniques that can deepen the Focuser's ability to stay with present awareness.

The essence of the course is learning to be an increasingly facilitative companion to the Focusing process for yourself and for others.

ADVANCED FOCUSING

Part One: Intermediate Guiding

- Beginning to learn how to facilitate a Focusing session for someone new to Focusing.

Supportive suggestions for each stage of the Focusing process will be taught.

Part Two: Advanced Guiding, Troubleshooting, & Deepening Focusing Facilitation Skills

- Learning a compassionate approach to handling various possible obstacles in the Focusing process such as how to assist a Focuser who becomes overwhelmed or feels nothing, has one part attacking or victimizing another, or is challenged by an inner critic.

⁶ Additional details may be found at <http://www.ruthhirsch.com/workshops-trainings/core/>

Appendix B

COMPETENCIES

For The Focusing Basics and Advanced Focusing Programs

The Certification Training Program is competency-based. Here are the competencies we expect you to have by the end of the training.

I. The Ability to Focus

- Understanding that Focusing is an inner relationship.
- Being able to bring awareness into the body, especially the area of the throat and torso.
- Being able to find a felt sense about an issue.
- Being able to find a felt sense without specifying the issue in advance. (What wants my awareness now?)
- Knowing that a felt sense is different from an emotion and from mental activity.
- Being able to hold an accepting attitude toward inner experience, or to notice when you can't be accepting.
- Knowing what to do when you can't hold an accepting or facilitating attitude.
- Being able to acknowledge your inner experience.
- Being able to find a “right” distance if something is too close.
- Being able to describe a felt sense.
- Being able to check or resonate the description with the body sense, and to check other meanings that come.
- Being able to sit with the felt sense with a curious, interested attitude, and ask it questions if necessary.
- Being able to receive new and positive awareness when it comes.
- Knowing about the most common blocks to Focusing, such as when you have something inside that is being critical, doubting, fearing, fixing, imposing, forcing a choice, or in some way attempting to manipulate the process as opposed to simply being with what is there.
- Being able to recognize and acknowledge blocks to Focusing when they come.
- Being able to create a “fence” around what has come in order to protect it.
- Being able to Focus alone, and knowing techniques to enhance this.

II. The Ability to Listen (Basic)

- Being able to be present with another person who is Focusing.
- Being able to give listening reflections, some word-for-word and some paraphrasing, without asking questions, leading, or interpreting.
- Being aware that the Focuser is in charge of their session.
- Including the Focuser in the reflection (i.e. "You're sensing," "You're realizing.")
- Being able to help the Focuser to “dis-identify” (i.e. by using “a part of you,” or “something in you.”)

- Being able to notice when something inside you is in the way of being able to listen to a Focuser, and knowing what to do about this.
- Knowing how to be present to yourself and to inwardly acknowledge your own feelings while listening to another.

III. The Ability to take part in a Focusing partnership

- As a Listener, being aware that the *Focuser* is in charge of the Focusing/listening exchange.
- As a Focuser, being able to tell a Listener how you would like to be listened to.
- As a Focuser, being able to use listening responses to check what has come inside.
- As a Focuser, being able to give feedback to a Listener, to say when a listening response is not right or only partly right, and to use that not-quite-right to sense what is right instead.
- Being able to have a successful experience of Focusing partnership.

IV. The Ability to Listen (Advanced)

- Being able to respond to what is true for the Focuser in present time (vs. past).
- Responding to what's there rather than what's not there.
- Not reflecting doubts or what's not known.
- Using "something" to respond to what's not yet specified.

V. The Ability to Guide a Focuser

- Knowing that the guide is guided by the Focuser's process.
- Having the attitude of the rightness of the Focuser's process for the Focuser.
- Being able to say "Yes" to whatever happens for the Focuser even if gently suggesting something else.
- Knowing how to use tone of voice and pacing to enhance the Focuser's experience.
- Being able to help the Focuser bring awareness into the body.
- Being able to help the Focuser acknowledge what comes.
- Being able to help the Focuser find the description.
- Being able to help the Focuser check and confirm the description and other meanings that come during the session.
- Being able to help the Focuser find a positive attitude toward the sense.
- Being able to help the Focuser be with the sense in a curious interested way, and ask it questions if necessary.
- Knowing how to help the Focuser create a positive inner relationship by sensing it from *its* point of view, and by letting it know they hear it.
- Being able to help the Focuser receive new and/or positive experiences.
- Being able to help the Focuser end the session gently, usually by marking the place and thanking what came.
- Being able to help the Focuser find the right distance if something is too close or too distant

- Being able to help a Focuser with distant process find a felt sense, using evoking techniques, acceptance and inclusion of whatever comes, and awareness of positive feelings.
- Being able to help the Focuser be compassionate and interested in interfering parts or voices, including those that may be critical or judgemental.
- Knowing how to help the Focuser when two or more “somethings” come, especially when they are in conflict.
- Being able to help the Focuser move awareness to the Feeling about the Feeling.
- Being able to help the Focuser be compassionate to blocks to Focusing.
- Knowing how to sense when a silence has lasted long enough and how to come in.
- Knowing how to gracefully accept a Focuser’s reluctance or refusal to do what’s been suggested.
- Being able to tell when something suggested has confused or stopped the Focuser, and knowing what to do about this, including being able to take it back, back up, or break it into smaller steps.
- Being able to help a person new to Focusing feel comfortable and safe.
- Being able to answer the question, “What is Focusing?”
- Being able to explain to the new Focuser before the session what is expected.
- Being able to use guiding skills with people new to Focusing.
- Being able to rephrase any suggestion using different language when the language used may not have been understood by this person.
- Understanding that reflections do not have the same effect for a new person that they do for an experienced Focuser, and being able to rephrase reflections as suggestions to resonate, acknowledge, or be with, as appropriate.
- Being open to the unexpected; being able to "forge new tools" as needed.

Appendix C

SUGGESTED SELF-ASSESSMENT FORMAT

(Adapted from Barbara McGavin, the British Focusing Teachers' Association, 1994)

Following is a possible outline for each assessment session. It is understood that the session is flexible, and is to be guided by the felt senses of both the trainee and the mentors.

1. The person whose assessment it is goes first. Examples of what they might focus on might include one or more of the following, as well as whatever else they might wish to focus on. Please note that this list is in no particular order.

Where am I now?

What have I accomplished?

What do I feel I have made my own?

What do I feel good about?

What might I feel is missing?

Do I need more information on something?

Is there somewhere that I feel I would like support?

What feels undeveloped, and as though it would like more attention?

What are my interests/passions at this time?

Do I need something from someone to help me?

What feels like the right next step for me?

Is there something between me and carrying out my next step(s)?

Is there something that needs attention right now in this assessment?

Where would I like to be in a year? 2 years? 5 years?

2. After the trainee feels finished and heard about a particular point, feedback may be given. All feedback is to be given from the felt sense.
3. The trainee then has the right to reply, from their felt sense.
4. The mentors may suggest a question or area for the trainee to focus on. At the same time, it must be OK for the trainee to say that they don't want to answer that question or explore that area at that time.
5. Action steps come first from the felt sense of the trainee. It is only after this that any additional thoughts or feelings of the mentors are shared.

The assessment process is one that is based on consensus. It is not possible to fail an assessment. If, after the third assessment, the trainee is not yet ready to be a trainer, if the trainee wishes to go on and the trainer is willing to continue to work with the trainee, there must be clear action steps and the possibility of another future assessment.

The purpose of assessment is for the trainee to become aware of their progress and development to date and to help them to develop action plans for the future. It is an opportunity for reflection, Focusing, thought, sharing, and for receiving support, information, and feedback. It is a time of sensing for what has life-forward direction. It is also a time to develop skills of communication, reaching consensus, and using Focusing interpersonally.

General principles and qualities of assessment:

1. The assessment process embodies focusing.
2. Whatever comes is welcome.
3. Things take as long as they take.
4. Support to independence. The trainee sets the pace. Mentors are there to support and aid in this development in the way the trainee needs.
5. Does what we are doing serve life, the individuals in the process, and the larger life?
6. The trainee owns the assessment process, as the Focuser owns the Focusing process.
7. Each of us has an inner sense of rightness which can be trusted. In any matter of common interest, each person's inner sense is consulted. Each person agrees to be willing for their inner sense to move in response to what others say. Until all individual inner senses concur, the true decision cannot have been reached.
8. Consensus may include unanimous agreement, consensus to vote, consensus to differ, or consensus for no deal.
9. The session aims to focus on the positive, on what works, at least as much as on what might still need attention.
10. Mentors are people, too; their feelings and thoughts also deserve space and respect.