

THE FOCUSING TRAINER & PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Mentor: Beatrice Blake

Certifying Coordinator with The International Focusing Institute

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

- Teaching Focusing to others
- Facilitating one-on-one Guided Focusing sessions either as stand-alone Focusing sessions or to complement existing professional skills;
- Deepening and expanding the participant's competence and confidence in Focusing.

The practice and teaching of Focusing is an art. Safety and respect are paramount not just in the practice of Focusing, but also in the process of teaching/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 work for you.

Prerequisites to enter the Certification program

Course Work

Focusing Levels 1-4 are the core training pre-requisites for the Certification program. A minimum of two of these courses (i.e. Focusing 1 and 2 and/or Focusing Levels 3 and 4) must have been taken with Beatrice. Specific training and requirements for becoming a Certified Focusing Trainer may differ between Certifying Coordinators (CC). This plan summarizes the program for Certification by Beatrice Blake (adapted from the Certification Program of Ruth Hirsch). See Appendix A for a summary of the 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.

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The Ten Elements of the Certification Program

The training program is based on a blend of content and skills. Familiarity with the recommended skills and objectives for Certification are listed 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 own 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.

1. Mentor(s)

Beatrice 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

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.

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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.

4. Supervision / Mentoring

Individual supervisory sessions

Individual mentoring sessions will happen once a month to help develop and refine personal/professional Focusing and facilitation skills. Some possibilities for mentoring sessions include:

- Fine-tuning learning to facilitate Focusing sessions for others or questions related to teaching Focusing to a group
- Guided Focusing sessions to address issues related to your own life as well as to becoming a Focusing Trainer;
- Responding to and discussing any other questions you might have.

Group study and practice sessions

Group sessions will happen twice a month. They are designed to help assimilate the readings, to share relevant experiences and encourage camaraderie and mutual support during the certification process.

5. Keeping a log of activities related to Trainer-in-training process

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

- Focusing-related books/articles read
- Sessions facilitated, either as part of your existing professional work or stand-alone Focusing sessions
- Challenges you encountered and questions for supervision

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- Insights gained as a result of sitting in on classes, your supervision sessions and your own Focusing sessions

6. Introducing Focusing in a one-on-one format

The trainee must find a minimum of ten individuals who haven't done Focusing before, and introduce each one to Focusing by facilitating a minimum of an initial introductory session with each.

For at least four of these people, the introduction session is to be followed by a minimum of three additional Guided Focusing sessions.

The trainee will

- Record a minimum of three of these sessions
- Write up a transcript of one meaningful segment from each of the recorded sessions
- Write questions that arise for the trainee during and after each session.
- Keep track of questions that might arise while working with the new Focuser, and bring these to be discussed at supervisory sessions.

7. Introducing Focusing in a group format

The trainee must plan a curriculum and teach at least one Focusing Level One training for a minimum of three to five participants. This course will be offered for a nominal fee, with participants understanding that the trainee is not yet a Certified Trainer. Beatrice will provide support and supervision for this training.

8. Apprenticeship

Certification trainees will be able to participate in Beatrice's classes in Focusing 1 and 2, Generating a Culture of Peace or Thinking at the Edge (whichever are given during the certification training period). These courses could be initiated by you with groups in your area or with populations that you are interested in working with. There will be no charge for your participation in these classes, but you will be required to do partnerships with other participants.

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9. *Focusing 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 veterans, Focusing and yoga, Focusing in schools, Focusing and healing, Focusing and theater, Focusing and technology, Focusing and spirituality, etc, etc); 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.

10. *Required reading (in addition to study of the Philosophy of the Implicit):*

Eugene Gendlin: Let your Body Interpret Your Dreams (1986)

Eugene Gendlin: The Client's Client

Eugene Gendlin: Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy (1996)

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

Additional requirements:

1. Membership in The International Focusing Institute as a Trainer-in-training (TNT) from the beginning of the certification process. See below for fees.
2. Participation in at least one local or international Focusing gathering/year, online or in person. If you have already attended the Focusing Institute Weeklong online, that will count toward this requirement. Hopefully you will continue to participate in Focusing conferences as long as you are seeing clients.
3. At the completion of your training, you will pay a certification fee to TIFI (see below.) If an in-person Weeklong is available, this fee will be included in the price of the Weeklong. The certification fee is not included if you have attended a Weeklong online.

What Certification Means

When you have completed the entire process, you may call yourself a Certified Focusing Trainer or a Certified Focusing Professional (you can choose either designation).

As long as you remain a member of TIFI, your name and contact information will be listed in the Directory published by the Institute and if desired, you may also have your name and contact information listed on TIFI's web site.

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Fees

1. Fees payable to Possibility Space LLC through PayPal

This program costs \$250 per person per month (\$3000 per year). This includes

- Private self-assessment sessions in January, June and December
- One private 50-minute session per month in February, March, April, May, July, August, September, October and November. These private sessions will cover
 - Challenges in teaching your Level One courses
 - Mentoring in relation to your apprenticeship in Beatrice's classes
 - Supervision of your Focusing Project
 - Personal challenges in relation to the certification process
- Two group classes per month to discuss assigned readings, teaching challenges and Focusing projects.
- Communication related to shepherding you through the logistics of setting up your courses, apprenticing, etc.

Payment plans:

\$3000 if paid by January 4, 2021

\$1050 per payment if paid on January 4, May 3 and September 1, 2021 (\$3150)

\$267 per payment if paid on the first of every month (\$3204)

2. Fees payable to The International Focusing Institute (TIFI)

- Membership in TIFI as a Trainer-in-Training: \$75 (US) / \$55 (Europe) per year. First year's membership is due at the beginning of your training.
Be sure to list Beatrice Blake as your certifying coordinator at focusing.org
- Once you become certified, the yearly TIFI membership fee will be \$165/year for trainers in the U.S. and \$120 for Europeans (rates might change.)
- Final payment of \$500 (US) / \$375 (Europe) to TIFI for certification. If you pay the \$500/\$375 fee and then wish at a later date to participate in an in-person Weeklong (up to two years following Certification), the certification fee will be deducted from the price of the Weeklong. The weeklong usually costs about \$1200 to \$1500 including room and board.

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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.

If this program resonates for you, or if you have further questions, please schedule a free consultation with Beatrice, beablake7@gmail.com to talk about your goals and any other questions that you might have. I look forward to hearing from you!

Appendix A

SUMMARY: CORE FOCUSING TRAINING PROGRAM

These courses must be completed prior to Certification training

Focusing Level One

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. Becoming aware of the difference between talking about an issue and felt sensing around an issue. Becoming aware of the need for self-empathy in order for Focusing to flow.

By the end of the course participants will be able to Focus either with a partner or on their own.

Focusing Level Two

Practicing listening to a partner and reflecting what they say

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

Focusing Level 3

Beginning to learn how to facilitate a Focusing session for someone new to Focusing. Supportive suggestions for each stage of the Focusing process.

Focusing Level 4:

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 hijacking or victimizing another, or is challenged by an inner critic. *See more at <https://possibility-space.com/upcoming-classes-in-english/level-4-what-to-do-when-focusing-becomes-blocked/>*

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Appendix B

COMPETENCIES

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

Focusing STAGE 1

- Focuser can sense the body, be with it, from inside.
- Focuser can get a "felt sense," a physical sensation that contains meaning and pertains to a particular situation, for example, an issue with one's work, a creative project or a relationship.
- Focuser can recognize how a felt sense differs from feelings and emotions.
- Focuser can recognize when words or images have come directly from the felt sense.
- Focuser is able to notice what would feel right to say from the felt sense of a particular situation.
- Focuser knows when a decision regarding the situation "sits right" and when it does not.
- Focuser can name or describe the crux of a situation in a way that "fits" the felt sense.
- Focuser is able to recognize a distinct bodily knowing even when she/he has no words yet to describe it.

Focusing STAGE 2

- Focuser is able to access a felt sense easily and comfortably.
- Focuser can stay with and return to a felt sense, so that it is a stable referent even as it may open and shift.
- Focuser recognizes and is comfortable with the experience of not wanting to attend to a particular situation or bodily knowing.
- Focuser knows how to stay near something difficult, neither leaving it nor going further into it.
- Focuser is able to find a "right distance" from difficult or complex issues.
- Focuser is able to have self-empathy, friendly attitudes toward oneself and the bodily knowledge that arises, even when it involves suffering or seemingly "negative" things.
- Focuser can easily get a felt sense of what is in the way when friendly attitudes seem impossible.
- Focuser is able to identify the several "situations" being carried by her/his body just now, and to "place" them one at a time, gently, at some distance from the body. Each placing brings a release of tension in the body.
- Focuser is able to connect intellectual understanding with bodily knowing, and to carry on a dialogue between the two.

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Focusing STAGE 3

- Focuser is able to attend to a felt sense and allow many aspects of it to emerge.
- Focuser often finds whole new fields or "subtexts" emerging from a felt sense.
- Focuser can let the subtexts inform a resulting decision on an issue.
- Focuser can choose to wait for subtext changes before taking action on a particular situation.
- Focuser recognizes new possibilities within a situation, which were not apparent from the original "given facts." New facts can be formulated.
- Focuser can discover new questions arising from the felt sense of a situation, leading to a new gathering of information.
- Focuser is able to make better decisions based on greater bodily knowledge.
- Focuser finds an expanded bodily-sensed realm in which one can move between different "places," clusters, and attitudes.
- Focuser can choose to live from the intricacy which is now always accessible.
- Focuser experiences a sense of reliable safety inside.

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.

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.

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- 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.

The Ability to Listen (Advanced)

- Being able to respond to what is true for the Focuser.
- 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.

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 an authentic way of relating to their inner world.
- 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.

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- 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 judgmental.
- 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 the 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.

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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 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.

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Self-assessment, continued:

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.
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