



# Training in Cognitive Analytic Therapy

- Introductory courses
- Skills Training in CAT
- Practitioner Training Courses
- Psychotherapy Training

The Association for Cognitive Analytic Therapy accredits and supports a variety of training offered by its members. They aim to be flexible and responsive to the needs of trainees and to the resources of training groups. There are four types of course at present, offering different levels of training in CAT theory and practice. All training is aimed at introducing CAT to people with qualification in professions allied to mental health work and are provided in service but may offer places to individuals who work outside of the NHS in relevant non-statutory services such as Eating Disorder services or Addiction services.

CAT is a versatile approach to psychological help and currently there are three main areas of the application of CAT in practice.

- As a broadly based psychological therapy focusing on a collaborative educational and therapeutic relationship
- As a consultative or team training tool working with the context and systems around the client in difficulty
- As a method of teaching relational thinking and relational skills to enhance general professional and psychological skills in working with people.

Training courses emphasise these elements to differing degrees.

Full details of forthcoming courses can be found on the ACAT website [www.acat.me.uk](http://www.acat.me.uk)

## Introductory Courses

These comprise either short, introductory workshops usually of one or two days in length or longer, six month to one year introductions. While certificates of attendance may be given, the courses are not assessed and do not lead to a qualification. One or two day introductory courses are held in different parts of the country at least twice or three times a year.

The general aim of Introductory Courses is to provide a clear introduction to the principles and practice of Cognitive Analytic Therapy. They provide an opportunity for participants to try out the methods and evaluate their interest in Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT) and identify further options for training or supervision. Participants will need some familiarity with the use of psychological ideas and methods in responding to mental health problems and emotional distress.

## Key ideas

- reformulation and brief structured therapy
- states of mind and disturbance of self
- reciprocal roles and a dialogic understanding of problem patterns
- enactments and therapeutic moments

## Typical methods

- collaborative and conversational use of diagrams and writing
- working with complex cases
- using CAT as a consultative method
- active use of time and endings

## An integrative approach

- to psychological therapies and mental health work
- differences and similarities with other models of therapy

## Learning methods

Learning methods include the use of video scenes and case material to demonstrate and develop skills in the use of therapeutic methods, lecture presentations and small group work.

## Practitioner Training

Practitioner training enables core mental health professionals with competence in their own field to enhance their understanding and skills in psychological therapy by learning the theory and methods of CAT as an individual therapy applied to adult mental health. These courses usually last two years and are assessed, leading to accreditation as a CAT Practitioner and eligibility for voting membership of ACAT. The courses are held at a number of venues across the country. All of these trainings are linked with universities and offer a Diploma or credits towards MSc qualifications and may have additional academic requirements. These courses provide qualification through accreditation with ACAT as a practitioner in CAT in one's core profession and such courses, having been run for the past twenty years, have a track record of providing mental health professionals with basic competence in the full use of CAT. In addition the practitioner training counts as the first two years in the four year process of qualification as a CAT psychotherapist accredited under current regulations by the UKCP. **MSc CAT:** Sheffield Hallam University has also accredited an MSc in CAT by research dissertation, which can be undertaken following practitioner training. MSc trainees are postgraduate students of Sheffield Hallam University and current members of ACAT and have appointed supervisors who are experienced in CAT research.

## Requirements for training

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate they are academically capable of undertaking post-graduate study and have personal qualities that make them suitable for the profession of psychotherapy, having sufficient emotional competence to deal with the psychological aspects of the work.

## Training methods, practice and written work

This is a two-year training with, usually, ten monthly training days per year. The training comprises a combination of workshops or training days, seminars, peer group work, personal learning, supervision, clinical practice and personal therapy. Experiential work focuses on personal exploration and the development of CAT skills and their clinical application. Trainees must complete a minimum of 8 supervised cases and pass all written work required by the course – one case study and one theoretical essay each year.

## Personal development

Trainees are required to have an experience of personal therapy during their practitioner training.

## Who are these courses suitable for?

Counsellors, nurses, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, psychologists, social workers and others interested in learning more about Cognitive Analytic Therapy as a response to mental health problems.

## CAT Skills Training

This training currently takes two forms. It is designed for those working in the health and caring professions to acquire a basic understanding of CAT and to apply it to their routine work, rather than to practice CAT as an individual therapy. The training may be delivered to whole teams or to groups of interested individuals and it can be offered in a range of formats, to suit the requirements of the group. It is usually completed within one year and some skills courses are validated by Sheffield Hallam University and offer sixty academic credits on successful completion. Such courses may appeal to people wanting to use CAT's relational understanding of mental health work, nursing and general health care.

Also for those in professions outside adult mental health or for those not yet ready or able to undertake the full in-service training in CAT there is the option to complete a skills certificate level course based upon the completion of two cases, 36 hours of supervision and 36 hours of training.

An interesting feature of both these skills courses is the requirement to have a mini therapy, usually in a single session, where the objective is to obtain a diagram mapping the likely patterns of interaction triggered in the participant when undertaking professional work.

## Psychotherapy Training

Psychotherapy training enables CAT Practitioners to become Cognitive Analytic psychotherapists via an additional two-year assessed course, which leads to eligibility for registration with the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy. There is currently one Psychotherapy Training within ACAT, which is a two-year training made up of six one-week residential blocks known as the Interregional Residential ACAT Psychotherapy Training (IRRAPT). Applicants to the Psychotherapy Training must have completed a two-year CAT Practitioner training.

Psychotherapy training extends and deepens the core concepts learnt in the Practitioner training, consolidating and broadening the awareness of trainees and equipping them to operate independently as psychotherapists. Particular attention is paid to the role of the psychotherapist and knowledge of the therapeutic relationship.

The training comprises a combination of workshops or training days, seminars, peer group work, personal learning, supervision, clinical practice and personal therapy.

Trainees must complete a minimum of 8 supervised cases and accumulate at least 480 client hours including all supervised cases from the start of their practitioner training. This will include assessments, follow-ups and uncompleted cases. Trainees will normally be expected to have a substantial experience of personal therapy throughout the duration of the training.

## Training for Supervisors

A programme based upon an apprenticeship model is also provided by ACAT for experienced CAT practitioners and psychotherapists to progress towards accreditation as CAT supervisor.

## International Training programmes

CAT has extended to nine other countries where formal training programmes are being offered or developed. Details of these can be obtained through the international pages [internationalCAT@acat.me.uk](mailto:internationalCAT@acat.me.uk)

## Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

In certain circumstances individuals may wish to have past training and experience recognised by ACAT and Sheffield Hallam University as equivalent to its current standards and to count towards an award. Guidelines exist that outline procedures for this route – see the ACAT website for the document that outlines the current ACAT APL guidelines. The Sheffield Hallam procedures are currently under development.

