

Suggestions for Training New CBI or MM Practitioners from the COMBINE site at CASAA

Despite our best intentions and planning, therapists leave in mid-trial and need to be replaced, which requires a new round of training and certification. Here are some suggestions to expedite certification when it is necessary to qualify a new therapist.

1. Start early. Whenever possible, anticipate the need to replace therapists, and have back-ups trained and certified. Rush-certification stresses everyone, and therapists given marginal provisional certification are more likely to be red-lined later.
2. Choose your candidate carefully. The biggest determinant of how long it will take to train up a new practitioner is likely to be the person's starting point - how far he or she has to go. Choose someone who already has clinical experience with similar procedures and populations.
3. When interviewing a prospective CBI therapist, do an on-site screen for high-quality reflective listening skills before sending us qualifying tapes. If the person's empathic skills are weak, it is likely to slow down the process substantially, and it also does not bode well for later training and certification in CBI. Don't rely on us to shape up poor empathic skills through tape monitoring. Even if a therapist squeaks by on a second try, they tend to struggle later.
4. Ensure that the practitioner studies the therapist manual fully and carefully before you begin training. Use the demonstration videotapes early to give the practitioner a sense of the "music" of the method.
5. Have the new practitioner trained by an experienced protocol therapist before they record and send us qualifying tapes. Don't think of tape monitoring as training. Initially-poor tapes invariably slow down the certification process. If you do not have a senior clinician experienced in the approach on site, arrange for your new practitioner to visit another site for training. There is no central budget for such training; the cost must be borne by the site needing a replacement therapist.
6. Review the practitioner's work before sending off qualifying tapes. Bumpy performance can be caught and reshaped more efficiently at your site than by cycles of feedback on tapes sent to CASAA. Get the practitioner's performance up to speed before sending tapes. Using tape monitoring as the vehicle for training and successive shaping of practice is a slow process, likely to take months.
7. Use an external microphone and good-quality recording tape and recording equipment, and check the audibility of copied tapes before sending them. Do not use mini-cassettes.
8. If you have special time constraints (such as a 3-month probationary period), let the CASAA supervisor know as soon as possible. Convey your needs and concerns directly to the protocol supervisor.

We will be transitioning to new protocol supervisors in the fall, but for now the supervisors remain:

CBI: Dr. Theresa Moyers tmoyers@unm.edu

MM: Dr. Judith Arroyo jarroyo@unm.edu