

5 THE FOUR FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION

5.1 Introduction

5.2 The four fields of specialization – brief descriptions

5.3 The core competencies

5.3.1 Counselling core competencies

5.3.2 Education core competencies

5.3.3 Organizations core competencies

5.3.4 Psychotherapy core competencies

5 THE FOUR FIELDS OF SPECIALISATION

5.1 Introduction

The theory and practice of TA is applied in four different areas – called the fields of specialization. It is possible to undertake training and certification in each of these fields. The four fields are counselling, education, organizations and psychotherapy.

5.2 Brief descriptions

- A. The **counselling field** of specialization: TA counselling is a professional activity within a contractual relationship. The counselling process enables clients or client systems to develop awareness, options and skills for problem management and personal development in daily life through the enhancement of their strengths, resources and functioning. Its aim is to increase autonomy in relation to their social, professional and cultural environment.
- B. The **education field** of specialization is for people who work in the area of learning and study in pre-school, school and university contexts. It is also concerned with the support of child, adolescent and adult learners within the family, the institution or society. The work may be applied to the development of teaching teams and institutions. The aim is to further personal and professional growth, both scholastic and social.
- C. The **organizations field** of specialization is for practitioners who work in or for organizations, taking into account organizational frames of reference and contexts as well as the organization's development. Their work is aimed at the development, growth and increased effectiveness of people working within organizations.
- D. The **psychotherapy field** of specialization is for trainees who aim to facilitate the client's capacity for self-actualization, healing and change. The psychotherapeutic process enables the client to recognize and change archaic, self-limiting patterns – 'to deal with the pain of the past in the present so that they are free to live their lives in the future'. The aim is for clients to understand themselves and their relationships and create options to live their lives in an aware, creative and spontaneous way.

There may be national legal restrictions on who can practice as a psychotherapist, and it is important that trainees discuss these with their supervisor when choosing this field of specialization.

5.3 The core competencies

A task force from each field has drawn up a set of core competencies, which articulate the knowledge, attitudes and skills expected from a certified transactional analyst in that field.

5.3.1 Counselling core competencies

Fundamental considerations

The core competencies formulated for the field of counselling will guide trainers in devising their specialist training curricula. This is not a list of the contents of the course; it is a description of inter-disciplinary *and* work-specific knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values for addressing the needs of the client and client systems engaged in counselling.

The term 'client system' refers to the client's context and the various groups and sub-groups of which the client is part (e.g., family, extended family, work group, cultural/religious group, etc.).

These core competencies describe the professional activities of transactional analysts in the counselling field.

TA in the field of counselling can be applied on two levels:

- **Complementary counselling** (or the use of counselling skills) as a sub-task in various psycho-social and socio-educational professions, as well as in other social, psychological, medical, legal and economic occupations.
- **Primary counselling** by professional counsellors working in private practice, counselling centers, voluntary, nonprofit and profit-oriented organizations etc.

In order to take due account of the holistic nature of the training in TA, the description of the core competencies comprises

- **three basic competencies:** the self-competency, social competency and technical competency of counsellors, plus
- **ten specific counselling competencies.**

Basic competencies are general areas of ability in which cognitive, personal and social skills are organized and employed in the profession.

Counselling competencies are occupation-specific skills, employed to meet the particular requirements needed for dealing with situations in the counselling field of application. Each of these counselling competencies is built on and related to the three basic competencies.

Core competencies of TA counsellors

(1) Basic competencies - interdisciplinary skills

(a) Self-competency

Personal, character-related skills: values, attitudes, behavior and character traits, such as initiative, activity, tenacity, and willingness to learn.

Clarification: the ability to deal with their own personality traits, needs and expectations, strengths and limitations and to follow the ethics guidelines of ITAA.

(b) Social competency

Basic social skills, such as co-operation, conflict resolution, negotiating skills.

Clarification: the ability to communicate and interact with clients, individuals and groups, as well as colleagues and other people in the professional environment on the basis of the philosophical assumptions of TA.

(c) Technical competency

Basic theoretical and methodical skills, such as managing process with regard to developing relationships, solving problems and working contractually, including knowledge of TA philosophy and theory.

Clarification: the ability to grasp and organize facts and situations and to deal with them both methodically and strategically, as well as to monitor the quality of interactions.

(2) Counselling competencies - specific professional skills

(a) Knowing and understanding the field of application

- Has in-depth technical expertise in their general and specialized field of counselling.

- Has professional experience in the field of application.
 - Uses in-depth knowledge of group dynamics and client systems.
 - Has awareness of opportunities and limitations in the counselling field.
 - Has a commitment to learning about and understanding socio-cultural influences on the field of application.
- (b) Assessment**
- Realistically assesses the potential for development and change in the client system.
 - Is familiar with the legal basis for work contracts, specific to the country of practice.
 - Is familiar with the specific criteria related to the practice of counselling for offering counselling services in their field of application.
 - Has awareness of own strengths and limitations as a TA counsellor.
- (3) Formulating and presenting the counselling concept**
- Organizes their different areas of counselling practice and presenting their work verbally and in writing in an understandable format, highlighting their counselling priorities.
 - Is familiar with a range of approaches suitable for dealing with the questions and problems that arise in their field of application, from initial contact through to the conclusion of the counselling.
 - Is familiar with other counselling approaches in addition to TA and knows when they might be useful.
- (4) Establishing and maintaining the counselling relationship**
- Knows and applies the ITAA principles of professional ethics.
 - Has sufficient insight into their own frame of reference to ensure adequate openness and transparency in the relationship with clients.
 - Is familiar with the principles of getting to know and establishing a trusting contact with clients and client systems.
 - Communicates on the basis of the I'm OK – you're OK attitude.
 - Facilitates a working relationship with the client and client system.
 - Is able to respond to and work with feelings, thoughts and behavior flexibly and in response to the client's personality.
- (5) Analyzing the counselling situation**
- Chooses an appropriate method during the initial meetings to collect the appropriate data and record the case history.
 - Applies TA and other theories to analyze the counselling situation.
 - Is capable of using the collected data to formulate a resource-oriented definition of the problem and communicates it clearly to the client or client system.
 - Takes into account, respects and understands the socio-cultural influences on the counsellor, the client and the client system.
- (6) Working with counselling contracts**
- Is familiar with TA contractual work and knows how to apply it professionally.
 - Is able to explain the concept of the TA contract in the context of a specific problem.
 - Can establish appropriate counselling contracts for different settings with individuals and groups.
 - Works on the basis of a contract and is capable of updating the contract as necessary.
 - Evaluates the contract during and at the end of the counselling process together with the client.

(7) Planning and making interventions

- Is capable of planning the counselling process in line with the agreed contract.
- Is able to apply TA theory and skills as well as being familiar with some other approaches, to establish effective problem-solving strategies.
- Uses effective interventions to promote autonomy, when working with the client or client system.
- Is capable of applying a range of interventions appropriate to the specific counselling situation, with individuals and groups.
- Works with the Adult ego state of the client and contacts the Child and Parent through the Adult ego state.

(8) Focusing on resources

- Is able to utilize and build on the client's strengths, as the agent for change.
- Identifies existing resources in the client and client system and integrates them into the counselling process.
- Has working knowledge of other local resources in the community, which could be of support to the client or to which the client could be referred, including medical, psychiatric, psychotherapeutic and other services.

(9) Dealing with crises

- Identifies a crisis situation and makes appropriate interventions.
- Where indicated, refers clients who are in crisis or in need, without undue delay, to the appropriate professional.
- Protects clients from harm.

(10) Monitoring quality and professional development

- Keeps clear and accurate records and reliable documentation about the counselling process according to professional and legal requirements.
- Has clear criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of counselling work, routinely reflects on their work on this basis and uses the results as a tool for personal and professional development.
- Shows awareness of economic circumstances in the counselling work.
- Reflects on their role as counsellor and presents their identity as a transactional analyst counsellor.
- Furthers their continuing professional development by attending courses, conferences, by studying literature, etc.
- Sets up professional supervision to monitor the quality of their work.

5.3.2 Education core competencies

Using his/her knowledge and understanding of TA theory, an educational transactional analyst will demonstrate the following abilities:

(1) General requirements

- Know current TA theory and its application to education.
- Compare and explain relevant educational theories from a TA perspective.
- Describe his/her own vision of education, how this correlates with TA, and how they promote this in different settings, taking into account the historical, cultural and educational context in which s/he is practicing.
- Know the current ITAA Code of Ethical Conduct (Section 3), apply this to educational settings, and demonstrate ethical and professional competence. 'Educational settings' include, but are not limited to, parent education, pre-school, school, college, adult and community education, youth work, vocational and professional training, and both formal and informal contexts.

(2) Educational relationship

Using an I'm OK–You're OK attitude, the TA educator will:

- establish a relationship of mutual respect that models caring, empathy, congruence, warmth and openness and promotes empowerment and autonomy;
- exhibit enthusiasm and respect for the needs of the learner and the subject matter;
- behave in a respectful way towards self and others, including awareness of and sensitivity to different frames of reference, cultures and social norms;
- have an understanding of the importance and potency of the educational relationship in the self-development of the learner and its difference from other relationships;
- demonstrate awareness of the boundaries of the educator's role (including when dealing with learners' needs);
- create an educational alliance by empathizing with a student's frame of reference, without losing contact with their own frame of reference or with the goals of the learning situation; and
- demonstrate potency, protection, permission, and perception and show understanding of their functions and importance, and of the function and importance of practice.

(3) TA theory

- Articulate an understanding of the basic theory of TA and its application in educational practice, including strokes, ego state analysis (structural and functional), TA proper, games, rackets, scripts, as described in the major TA texts; also of child and adult development, group development, transference and countertransference from an educational TA perspective.
- Describe the different TA schools and indicate their applicability in the educational setting.
- Explain educational practice in terms of TA theory, showing how the methodology manifests TA concepts.
- Apply TA theory to an understanding of the learning process.

(4) Contracting

- Explain and use the concept of contracts, and the three- or more-cornered contract from an educational TA perspective.
- Establish contracts for different types of educational settings to reflect awareness of needs, goals, context, culture and the boundaries of each system.
- Monitor, review and, when required, renegotiate contracts.

(5) Planning

- Assess the educational and developmental needs of a particular group or individual.
- Establish the aims and objectives for the program, when appropriate with the participant(s), in order to meet the assessed needs or mandated requirements.
- Design a program that carries out the established aims and objectives.
- Design ground rules to be contracted with the group
- Demonstrate an understanding of group process and plan appropriately for different group stages.
- Understand and use different styles of leadership, as appropriate.
- Demonstrate awareness of different learning styles, the ability to identify these for individuals and groups and their implications for planning.
- Plan content delivery in a variety of ways to enhance the learning process.
- Evaluate the learning outcomes and their implications for future planning and

practice.

(6) Implementation

- Operate from an I'm OK–You're OK position.
- Contract with the group so as to enhance the learning process, including agreeing on or negotiating ground rules.
- Use and apply principles of adult education or suitable pedagogies as appropriate.
- Give permission and protection to learn, think, challenge, question, grow, and change.
- Demonstrate integration and use of TA concepts in practice.
- Present, apply, and teach TA concepts as appropriate for implementation of the program.
- Use self-awareness in appropriate TA interventions including self-disclosure.
- Demonstrate congruence in interactions.
- Stroke students/participants for participation, cooperation, and respect for the group members, in order to enhance motivation and creativity in the promotion of health and autonomy.
- Recognize and respond appropriately to games, discounts, crossed and ulterior transactions, and invitations to symbiosis.
- Consider the cultural script of an organization and identify how this may affect the content and process of teaching and learning within it.
- Contribute theoretical information to empower students to understand their own behavior.
- Differentiate direct and indirect learning and decide when each is appropriate.

(7) Personal attributes

- Demonstrate a commitment to the philosophy of TA.
- Demonstrate self-reflective practice, congruence, and the ability to listen.
- Maintain and model OKness through respect, awareness, reliability, professionalism and integrity.
- Articulate personal and social vision and goals for teaching.
- Recognize own personal strengths and limitations and those of the educational setting.
- Confront appropriately, including dealing with disruptive group process.
- Understand the requirements for personal and professional awareness and development, and demonstrate a willingness to learn, grow, and change.
- Be willing to accept feedback, to confront personal issues and undertake personal therapy, when indicated, in the process of becoming an effective TA educator.

5.3.3 Organizations Core Competencies

Transactional analysts in the field of organizations (CTA-O) must have a basic relevant degree in any subject or comparable professional experience in the field. In addition they are expected to have general knowledge of economy, finance, sociology, psychology and law.

TA adds its own dimension to this. With this total equipment, CTA-Os (who can be consultants, teachers, managers, CEOs, and who can come from outside or inside the organization) should be able to identify the needs of a corporation, organization or institution and assess whether they have the skills to assist them with these needs.

This includes that the client of a CTA-O (for example as described in the case study part of the examination) is the organization itself, not an individual, or a team who happens to

operate in an organizational context but with whom the practitioner is working separately. The link with the development of the organization as a whole must be visible.

On deciding that they are competent to undertake the work, a CTA-O must then have the ability to plan and design the intervention, deliver and finally evaluate the outcomes. In Bernean terms this would mean to increase the autonomy of organizations - their effectiveness, durability and capacity for development.

The following is split into areas of competence required by a CTA-O, which fit into the above process. So, a CTA-O must be able to undertake all of the following using TA both as an approach and in the process of reflection.

(1) Understanding the professional context

Transactional analysts in organizations must be able to

- understand change processes in organizations, which take into account the socio-economic and political reality, frames of reference, systems, culture, relationships, the influence of the organization on the individual and vice versa;
- have an adequate assessment of own competencies and referral possibilities;
- reflect on and teach theoretical models, especially from TA, to address organizational needs;
- relate on micro and macro levels, from individuals to the whole organization, and be able to analyze and consider the whole as well as the parts;
- reflect on these aspects, using TA concepts.

(2) People and systems

Transactional analysts in organizations must be able to

- know and apply models for working with people in systems;
- show an understanding of systemic and personal aspects and reflect on the level and effects of interventions;
- deal with complexity whilst prioritizing and focusing on key issues;
- manage the boundary between organizational goals and personal needs;
- show an awareness of interactions between subsystems including their own consultant system;
- discriminate between individual and organizational learning processes, connect these processes with the marketplace, with employees and with the organization's survival;
- reflect on these aspects, using TA concepts.

(3) Contracting and assessing

Transactional analysts in organizations must be able to

- select the applicable authority to contract with;
- work with multi-level and multi-cornered contracts;
- identify the key requirements of the organization or individual to ensure the appropriate interventions;
- accurately identify the range of options for interventions;
- identify methods of integrating different learning and assessment opportunities;
- select options effectively to promote equality of opportunity and access to achievement;
- reflect on these aspects, using TA concepts.

(4) Designing and implementing

Transactional analysts in organizations need to be able to

- achieve learning objectives as specified;

- evaluate the effectiveness of the programs;
- consider the balance and content of different length programs;
- identify possible design problems and generate realistic ideas for overcoming them;
- use and adapt materials from external sources within the constraints of copyright law;
- discuss designs with others at critical development stages;
- agree and maintain time scales;
- reflect on these aspects, using TA concepts;
- design and implement project management.

(5) Creating a positive, safe learning climate and culture

Transactional analysts in organizations must be able to

- give a rationale for the style of interaction and how it promotes rapport between all parties;
- show to have given consideration to factors which create a safe climate and culture, such as:
 - actively listening and giving feedback to participants;
 - encouraging participants to question and discuss the task;
 - supporting I'm OK – you're OK principles;
 - stroking in general;
 - identifying constraints on communication due to environmental, social and culture issues;
- be anti-discriminatory in their practice and promote this in ways which are consistent with their role, organizational policy and legislation;
- reflect on these aspects, using TA concepts.

(6) Managing group dynamics

Transactional analysts in organizations must be able to

- maintain a balance between group process and the task;
- encourage equal participation;
- identify and work with those avoiding the task;
- challenge stereotyping of individual roles and behaviour in the group and constructively use this to enhance learning;
- show knowledge of different types of groups;
- show their awareness of key theoretical models of group work;
- form, maintain and close groups;
- recognize and work with power and authority in groups;
- reflect on these aspects, using TA concepts.

(7) Evaluating intervention(s)

Transactional analysts in organizations needs to be able to

- identify ways for evaluating interventions and the rationale for their selection;
- explain the scope and purpose of the evaluation;
- be aware of the debates in the field concerning evaluation and quality improvement;
- clearly identify what will be evaluated and know how to collect the appropriate information;
- reflect on these aspects, using TA concepts.

(8) Evaluating own practice

Transactional analysts in organizations need to be able to

- evaluate their own practice against set goals and criteria;

- be aware of own impact on others;
- accept feedback in a positive manner and assess it for validity and importance;
- set clear and realistic goals and targets for their own development in order of priority;
- reflect on these aspects, using TA concepts.

(9) Addressing ethical issues

Transactional analysts in organizations must be able to

- show an awareness of ambiguities of boundary issues when working in organizations;
- be able to discuss and show evidence of ethical behavior in organizations and the use and abuse of the consultant/practitioner's role vis-à-vis the different roles in the organization;
- show that they have appropriately set and maintained boundaries to information shared by management about employees or by a coachee with the consultant;
- follow and reflect on the ITAA Code of Ethical Conduct (Section 3).

5.3.4 Psychotherapy core competencies

Using their knowledge and understanding of TA theory, a TA psychotherapist will demonstrate the following abilities:

(1) General requirements

- Understand TA theory and its application to psychotherapy with individuals and with couples, families and groups as appropriate.
- Assess the client and make an informed decision about taking the client into treatment, including up-to-date knowledge of other treatment possibilities, the ability to convey different options to the client, and the willingness to assist in choosing how to proceed.
- Know the ITAA Code of Ethical Conduct (Section 3) and demonstrate ethical and professional competence in practice, including working within the legal requirements governing psychotherapy in the region of practice.
- Demonstrate the ability to locate TA within the wider field of psychotherapy.
- Have an awareness of the significance and implications of cultural and social diversity and difference within and outside the consulting room.

(2) Therapeutic relationship

- Manifest a respectful attitude towards self and others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the therapeutic relationship in effecting change, its nature, and its difference from any other relationship.
- Show empathic sensitivity and understanding of the client, their symptoms and self-limiting script, as well as showing the ability to communicate this understanding to the client in such a way that the client feels understood.
- Exhibit a capacity to understand another person's phenomenology and bracket their own frame of reference without losing contact with their own separate experience.
- Display ability to self-reflect and to use this self-awareness in appropriate self-disclosure.
- Demonstrate an understanding of developmental issues, transference and countertransference phenomena, and the ability to use TA to address these successfully. This will include the willingness to allow transference to develop in the client/therapist relationship and to handle the client's regressive states appropriately and therapeutically. It will also include understanding their own countertransference and the limits it may create, as well as the ability to use it

- constructively.
 - Behave in a respectful way toward self and others, show sensitivity for different frames of reference, cultures, and social norms, as well as taking account of the impact on the relationship of these differences in the consulting room.
 - Demonstrate potency, protection, and permission and show an understanding of their importance.
 - Communicate congruence in their interactions.
- (3) TA theory**
- Articulate an understanding of the basic theory of TA and its application in clinical practice as described in the major TA texts, including structural analysis, TA proper, game, racket and script analysis and child development.
 - Describe the application of aspects of all the major approaches to TA and demonstrate knowledge of recent developments, including the similarities and differences between these approaches.
 - Demonstrate an understanding of TA theories of group process.
 - Make interventions, which can be explained according to TA theory and practice.
- (4) Contracting**
- Show an understanding of the necessity for a clear business contract as well as the ability to negotiate contracts.
 - Have the capacity to negotiate with a client in order to arrive at a shared understanding of the work to be undertaken and to formulate an appropriate treatment contract. This will include understanding and respecting the difference between contracts for social control and contracts for autonomy, which allow for intrapsychic and interpersonal change involving dismantling limiting scripts and the resolution of impasses.
- (5) Planning: assessment and treatment direction**
- Describe a comprehensive system of assessment and diagnosis using standard TA concepts.
 - Show an understanding of the psychiatric diagnostic systems used in the country in which practice takes place (e.g., DSM, ICD).
 - Make meaning of a client's experiences using standard TA concepts in a way that maintains the I'm OK – You're OK attitude.
 - Show an awareness of and have the ability to respond to risk and harm factors for self, client, and others.
 - Assist the client in recognizing and naming their self-limiting patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving and in deciding whether or not change is desired.
 - Conceptualize, using TA theory, in order to develop an overall treatment plan based on the particular issues to be addressed.
- (6) Implementation: the psychotherapeutic process**
- Show the capacity to make accurate phenomenological observations of the client and use those as the basis for a therapeutic hypothesis that is linked to TA theory and philosophy.
 - Show ability to use group process as an effective intervention.
 - Select interventions appropriate to the stage of treatment and the treatment contract.
 - Demonstrate the ability to effect timely interventions.
 - Recognize and assess script issues as they arise within the session and address them appropriately according to the stage of treatment (for example, script signals, game invitations, discounts, driver behavior).
 - Show the ability to evaluate the effect of an intervention and use that information

to update hypotheses and select subsequent interventions.

- Encourage the client's autonomy and resources.

(7) Personal attributes

- Demonstrate a commitment to the philosophy of TA in such qualities as a belief in the capacity of the individual to take responsibility for him/herself, understanding an individual's ways of being, and responding to an individual's ability to grow and change.
- Have a willingness to be available for ethically intimate contact, including the practice of appropriate self-disclosure.
- Demonstrate a commitment to ongoing personal and professional development, specifically the development of autonomy, including the capacity for awareness, spontaneity, and intimacy such that therapeutic interventions are not affected by script decisions.
- Recognize one's own limitations and the limitations of psychotherapeutic practice.
- Use intuition and creativity in response to the therapeutic situation.
- Show understanding of strengths and limitations of personal resources.
- Have the ability to seek help appropriately and use it effectively.
- Demonstrate the capacity for self-reflection.