



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Attachment-Based Family Therapy Program

College of Nursing and Health Professions

ABFT Level II Trained Therapist & Certification Process

The ABFT Training Program has a defined process for certifying therapists in ABFT. The certification process takes a minimum of 1-year (most complete the process in 18 months) and consists of didactic work, video consultation with individual feedback, and group consultation. Before completing the certification process, therapists in training may say they are conducting ABFT informed work. Therapists that have been certified may refer to themselves as ABFT certified therapists.

Therapists participating in a supervision group, can chose to have their contact information listed on the ABFT Training Program website as an ABFT Trained (not certified) Therapist. Once certified, their contact information will be moved to the ABFT Certified Therapist list. Please contact Suzanne Levy, Ph.D. (slevy@drexel.edu), Training Director of the ABFT Training Program if you are interested in pursuing Therapist Certification or have any questions.

Training Timeline	
Timing	Content
Start	Two-Part Introductory Workshop
0-3 months post workshop	Obtain cases and begin group consultation
0/3-12/15 months	Participate in group consultation
6 months or more	Advanced Workshop
6 – 12/18 months	Submit tapes for tape review (approximately 1-2 tapes per month)

Therapist Requirements: Therapists in the U.S. need to have at least a master’s degree in social work, mental health counseling, clinical or counseling psychology, or couple’s and family therapy. If therapists are not licensed, they need to be employed somewhere where they are receiving supervision. International therapists need to have local certification or licensure allowing them to practice therapy. In addition, therapists must ensure they have sufficient clinical time to treat ABFT clients (at least 2-3 clients at a time).

Readings

Therapists are required to read the entire treatment manual titled, “Attachment-Based Family Therapy for Depressed Adolescents” which was published by the American Psychological Association (Diamond, Diamond & Levy, 2014). It is recommended that therapists read the manual prior to attending the two-part introductory workshop, but is not required.

Workshops

Level I: Introductory Workshop:

Therapists must attend a Two-Part Introductory Workshop or Webinar. During Part One, lecture and therapy tapes are used to provide an overview of the model including theoretical foundation and clinical strategies of ABFT. Faculty review how attachment theory, emotional regulation and trauma resolution inform the delivery of this experiential treatment approach. We also review the goals and structure of the five treatment tasks that provide a road map for delivering this interpersonally focused psychotherapy effectively and rapidly. Part Two build on Part One and provides a more in-depth look at the procedures and process involved in facilitating ABFT. Case discussion, tape review and role-play deepen the participants understanding of the approach. Throughout Part Two, therapists are also taught how to use the ABFT adherence checklists.

Benefits of the Two-Part Workshop or Webinar

By attending the Part One introductory workshop or webinar, attendees will have a basic understanding of how to use attachment theory to guide family intervention. Attendees will also gain a general introduction to the task structure of the model. Part Two provides a more in depth exposure to the scaffold of each task. We review extended clips of therapy tapes, talk about challenges and then role play the core elements of each task. This gives therapist a more practical sense of how to apply the model with at least moderately cooperative families. The goal is to learn to apply the basic structure, not to modify the model to more difficult or different kinds of families. That comes in supervision and the advanced training.

Level II: Advanced Workshop:

Therapists must also attend an advanced workshop (3-day) or webinar (6 half-days). It is recommended that this is attended approximately 6 months after the introductory workshop. It can be attended after a longer duration. This workshop/webinar is a follow-up, intensive, supervision workshop with some didactic presentations. This workshop/webinar, helps advance therapist's ABFT skills. Participants discuss person of the therapist issues as they relate to ABFT and learn about the use of emotion-deepening skills in the context of ABFT. During the advanced training, a certified ABFT trainer provides supervision via live supervision (when possible), and role-play. In preparation for the training, we ask therapists to think about their biggest challenges in utilizing ABFT with families in Tasks 1-5.

Benefits of the Advanced Workshop

The Advanced Workshop helps solidify ABFT skills. Participants gain an understanding of how their own attachment history creates barriers or can help facilitate their delivery of therapy. They learn how to utilize their own personal experiences in life to build empathy and understanding of their clients' experiences. Additionally, with practicing emotional deepening skills in role plays and receiving feedback, participants leave with a new understanding of how to deepen their ABFT work with clients. In this workshop we also talk more about how to adapt and or modify ABFT with more challenging clients.

Supervision (Level II)

After the initial Two-Part Level I workshop, training therapists are eligible to begin a series of 22 fortnightly, 60-minute individual or group case consultation video-conferencing meetings with an ABFT certified consultant (~1 year). Trainees are expected to discuss their current cases in which they are applying ABFT. Therapists are required to send a short case write-up using the ABFT Case Write-up Outline when they present a case. In addition, they are expected to present 5-10 minute recordings of their therapy sessions each time they present.

Benefits of Supervision

Supervision sessions help therapists who have attended the Two-Part Introductory training implement ABFT more effectively with clients. During supervision, therapists learn how to conceptualize from an ABFT framework so that they can utilize ABFT with a variety of different clients, presenting problems, and difficult situations. Through presenting 5-10 minute videos of sessions, therapists receive detailed feedback on the moment-by-moment decisions that occur in therapy. Additionally, the brief videos help therapists hone their ABFT specific skills. ABFT Supervisors also help therapists identify and work through person-of-the-therapist issues that arise when doing this interpersonal, emotionally deep work.

Level II trained ABFT Therapist

In order to achieve the status of a Level II Trained ABFT Therapist, therapists must complete the following activities:

- Participate in 22 supervision sessions.
- Present at least 4 cases during supervision utilizing the case write-up or case conceptualization form. Case presentations do not have to be from the same case.
- Show at least 2 video excerpts of cases during the course of supervision.
- Attend the ABFT Advanced Workshop
- Complete the ABFT Exam and receive at least an 80%.

Level III: Videotape Review

After attending the Advanced Workshop and participating in Supervision (supervision does not need to be finished), trainees begin submitting video recordings of complete (i.e., 1 hour) ABFT sessions for review by certified supervisors. Trainees submit a minimum of 10 tapes at a rate of one to two videotapes a month. Tapes should be of recent sessions so that therapists can demonstrate their use of feedback from the group supervision sessions and recordings submitted for review. The ABFT supervisor informs the therapist which tasks or portions of a task to submit. When submitting tapes, therapists must provide a case write-up (template provided) and self-feedback on their tapes with suggestions for how to improve portions of their sessions that are not consistent with ABFT or could be improved in general. Therapists also rate their own tapes with the ABFT adherence measure. ABFT Certified Supervisors review the tapes and provide in-depth written feedback, adherence ratings and offer a 20-minute phone consultation (as needed) regarding the tape. (Tapes need to be conducted in English or need to be transcribed to English for review.)

Completing all 10 tapes does not guarantee that someone is certified. A therapist may need to submit additional tapes (at additional cost) if they have yet to sufficiently develop certain skills. However, we have found that with the level of feedback we provide, most therapists are ready for certification review after 10 tapes.

Benefits of Therapy Tape Review

Participating in video review assures that therapists are using ABFT with fidelity. Therapists can feel confident that they are implementing the model the way it is intended. We are confident that certified ABFT therapists can represent the work as it is intended. Certification has become a standard clinical training procedure throughout the world of dissemination of empirically supported treatments.

TIME COMMITMENT

Below is a breakdown of the hours that each therapist would be expected to invest in order to obtain certification.

1 –Year Option

Total hours are 100 if partaking in 60-minute group consultation. This includes 24 hours for the introductory workshop, 24 hours for the advanced workshop, 22 hours for 22 60-minute group consultation, and 30 hours for self-review of the 10 tapes sent to supervisor (estimated time to review is 3 hours).

ADDITIONAL TRAINING/SUPPORT

Mechanism for ongoing Supervision/Support

If therapists desire supervision beyond their 1-year contract, they may pay for ongoing supervision.