

IRT Therapist Certification Protocol

Certification as an IRT therapist is based on an understanding of IRT that includes conceptual mastery of the theory, ability to construct a case formulation, and demonstrated ability to implement IRT in clinical work. Certification therefore requires a combination of self-directed reading, experienced gained in consultation with a Certified IRT Trainer, and direct, formal review and evaluation of a therapist's work to assess adherence to IRT principles.

At present, training from certified IRT trainers,* is available on a limited basis and is coordinated by Dr. Ken Critchfield.

Certification process and requirements

- (1) Hold a current license to practice psychotherapy in the jurisdiction where you are practicing.
- (2) Read and be acquainted with all three of Benjamin's books, respectively emphasizing: Personality disorder; IRT procedures; using natural biology in IRT.
- (3) Learn to develop IRT Case Formulations as well as how to evaluate adherence to IRT principles.
- (4) Have a minimum of 100 hours of experience practicing IRT, with at least 25 sessions receiving direct observation and consultation (e.g., by video review) by a Certified IRT Trainer. (note: If consultations occur in a group setting, 25 of the therapy sessions reviewed must have been conducted by the candidate. The observed sessions do not need to be from the same therapy but should be selected in consultation with your IRT trainer).
- (5) After completing the experience requirements, IRT therapist candidates must submit video from one of their own therapy patients for formal evaluation and review of IRT adherence. Specific procedures for that are described below.

(Note: it is also recommended and helpful if IRT therapist candidates have at least one year of at least once a week therapy from an IRT certified therapist, but this is not required)

Procedure and Materials needed for IRT adherence evaluation

1) Signed release of information from patient/s for Certified IRT Trainer review of (a) deidentified case formulation, (b) deidentified session notes, and (c) two session video recordings (preferably from different phases of therapy). (note: It is allowable for the two recordings to come from two different therapies, but each would require a separate release, and also a separate case formulation as per the below).

2) Completed case formulation for the patient/s using a template provided and explained by the Certified IRT Trainer. If the case formulation has serious problems, or if insufficient detail is provided to allow determination of its validity, the review process will stop until the issue is resolved. If the issue is not resolved within a specified period of time, all materials will be returned and applicants will be billed only for the time spent in review and preparation of feedback.

3) Two video-recorded therapy sessions of the IRT therapist candidate working with the patient/s (both patient and therapist should be visible on the recording; if there are questions, please ask about ways to arrange the video for effective evaluation).

4) Detailed session notes for each recorded session PLUS notes for the two sessions conducted prior to, and one session after, each session rated for adherence (discuss preferred notes format with the trainer).

5) Candidate's own self-rating of adherence for their sessions using forms provided by the IRT Certified Trainer, plus any remarks they wish to make about the session.

The above materials should be provided to the Certifying IRT trainer using secure, HIPAA-compliant methods (arranged with the trainer in advance). All materials will be held for a period specified in advance by which all materials must be returned or destroyed.

Fees for adherence review

A minimum of 5 hours is required for an IRT supervisor/trainer to review all materials, make adherence ratings, and generate written feedback. Sometimes a longer period is needed to accomplish the review and feedback. The trainer will specify the fee for this work, which is typically at an hourly rate similar to that of providing consultation and training.

Certification is not guaranteed as the outcome is dependent on (1) the quality of the case formulation and (2) demonstration of strong adherence to IRT principles in both submitted sessions and accompanying materials. Fees for adherence review are not refundable. Feedback will be provided after adherence review including the nature of any problems observed if the review was not passed. Multiple attempts at certification are allowable under conditions that would be specified as part of the trainer's feedback after adherence review. The trainer will typically be able to consult, if needed/desired, about ways to enhance training so as to increase adherence for additional future review.

* Certified IRT trainer candidates: (a) are certified IRT therapists, (b) hold a current license to practice psychotherapy in the jurisdiction in which they are practicing, and (c) meet requirements for effective training and evaluation of IRT work as specified in a separate trainer's protocol.