

The GFM Trainers' Journey: Briefing Notes

Revised June 2019



Introduction

These notes are intended to be read by those considering becoming a ToP trainer, those on the Trainers' Journey and those guiding/mentoring them. They are intended to explain more clearly the stages of the Trainers' Journey to people on it, and help them understand their role better as they go through the stages. The twin principles underneath are clarity and transparency. They have been compiled by drawing on experience over many years of training GFM's and other ToP courses.

Progression through the stages

The purpose of the Trainers' Journey is to provide an opportunity to progress through the stages in order to achieve the competencies required of a ToP Lead Trainer (see separate document). While the end point remains the same (mastery of the competencies) how many courses need to be completed at each level may well differ between individuals, depending on their starting point and the pace at which they are able to follow the journey (which can be determined by their own availability but also on how many co-trainer opportunities we are able to create). It will also depend on their starting point, their levels of experience, etc. As a rough guide, it is likely that you will need only one course as a participant and as a participant observer; perhaps two as a trainee and 2-3 as a co-trainer. Our experience is that the shift from co-trainer to lead trainer is the biggest step of all of them. A person on the journey may also decide not to progress.

Remuneration

ICA:UK recognises and appreciates the levels of investment trainees are expected to make in order to complete the whole journey. We therefore seek to support the trainee as much as we can by:

1. For Participant/Observers we will waive any fees payable
2. For Trainee Trainers we will waive any fees and cover your costs of travel and accommodation (if needed)
3. For co-trainers we will pay you at the agreed co-trainers rate and cover your expenses
4. Once recognised as a GFM Lead Trainer you will receive the Lead Trainer's fee and have your expenses covered

Support and Guidance

"The process of becoming a lead trainer has been the most valuable CPD I have ever had. Supportive and constructive feedback after every session was much appreciated and I know I am a much more confident facilitator as a result. I don't get that level of critical reflection anywhere else in my working life."

This is an experiential approach to learning. ICA:UK currently has no training of trainers course, and so you learn by observing, reflecting, practicing and doing. On this journey you will be supported by:

- a named mentor, who will be an experienced ToP trainer who will remain a point of reference and support for you. They will also play the role of being an Assessor, providing feedback on

areas for improvement. Rarely do people “fail” but there may be a mutual decision not to continue with the journey.

You will agree who you would like as mentor at the beginning of your journey, and you will be able to arrange with them how often you check in, look at your progress, etc. [N.B. It is intended to produce guidance for both mentors and mentees in future.]

- the lead trainers you work with. ICA:UK/your mentor will ensure that you work with a number of different lead trainers on your journey. ICA:UK does not insist on a particular personal style of training, and you will benefit by working with people who have different styles so that you can eventually settle on your own. By being involved in the preparation, delivery and debrief of the courses, you will have the opportunity to observe the whole process, to ask questions throughout, and to make decisions about your own approach. You may also want to discuss where you are with the competencies with the lead trainers.
- Materials: at the point of moving from the participant observer to the trainee trainer stage, you will receive a trainer’s manual. This provides a comprehensive guide to how to deliver the course. ICA:UK has also developed some visual aids for the course which you will have access to, but trainees are also encouraged to develop their own materials to give the course a more personal feel and which you can adapt to suit your personal style

What does your destination look like?

Once you have reached the point where you and your mentor agree that you are a lead trainer, then you are invited to continue to work with ICA:UK under a [Licence Agreement](#) which places you on a roster for delivering ICA:UK’s training courses and entitles you deliver in-house courses in your own name. ICA:UK does not guarantee work for its trainers, but currently is able to 1-2 delivery opportunities to each trainer annually. You will be part of a community of ToP trainers who work together, meet regularly and offer mutual support.

Structure of the notes

There is a page or more of notes for each stage of the journey. This includes:

- what you need to have done to reach that stage
- what you need to do before, during and after the course
- information on your responsibilities and role

The notes are cumulative, so each stage includes the guidance on previous stages.

Briefing Notes for a GFM Participant/Observer

In order to be a Participant/Observer on a GFM, you need to:

- Have completed a GFM as a participant
- Have booked a place on a 2nd GFM as a participant/observer

What is a Participant/ Observer

A participant/observer (p/o) is somebody who is considering becoming a trainer, and/or is interested in deepening their understanding of methods. There is no commitment to a training role.

Before the Course

- Review your own GFM **participant's manual** and any notes you made as a participant
- Consider your current strengths related to the course, and **what you'd like to learn**. Are you particularly interested in the methods? In training? In group dynamics? In facilitation in general?
- Make **travel & accommodation arrangements** once the course is confirmed.
- Decide what role you want to play (probably in discussion with the other trainers) to make your position clear within the team and with the participants from the beginning

Things to bring

- Participant's Workbook

During the Course

- the key is '**sensitive participation**' - join in and make your points, but remember that it's the participants' learning that is paramount in session time - so don't speak up first, rather offer your contributions to help move the process or group along.
- Observe throughout (both the content of the training and the process), take notes if you like. Watch what the trainers do, how they do it, but also what the participants do & say and how they respond to the course. This is often a good chance to review the notes you've got about the methods, and check your own understanding
- participate fully in the practicalities of the course - there's always a lot to do! E.g.
 - setting up and packing away
 - coffee cups, snacks etc – generally keeping the room looking good
 - helping write flipcharts before sessions and documentation after sessions
- observe/participate in faculty meetings for planning & review – there's a lot to be learnt there (usually a pre-course meeting, a short meeting after day 1, and a longer one after day 2 to review the course)
- also participate fully in Focused Conversation Method /Consensus Workshop Method demos, but sit back more during the talkthroughs
- don't get involved in the practice prep - this is a good time to sit back & observe, and catch up on your notes
- participate fully in practice conversations and workshops – you can help make up numbers.

After the Course

- Review your experience (what happened? what did I do? Highs/lows? Learnings? What would I like to do at the next course? What should I do between now & then?)
- Consider whether or not you want to embark on the Trainers' Journey

Briefing Notes for a GFM Trainee Trainer

These notes should be given to the TT at least 4 weeks in advance of the course, and talked through between lead trainer and trainee trainer by phone or face-to-face

In order to be a Trainee Trainer on a GFM, you need to:

- Have completed a GFM as a participant
- Have completed a second GFM as a participant/observer (i.e. completed at least 2 GFMs)
- Have some experience of facilitating using Focused Conversation Method and/or Consensus Workshop Method outside the ToP courses
- Be aware of the ToP trainer competencies requirements

What is a Trainee Trainer?

A trainee trainer is somebody who is training to become a ToP trainer and is ready to take on a minor training role on a GFM. You will have received a copy of the Trainers Manual in recognition of your commitment to develop as a trainer and you should have agreed who will be your mentor. You will usually do two courses as a Trainee trainer before being ready to assess for the next stage (Co-trainer), giving them the chance to explore and understand the methods and the course from a variety of angles.

Before the Course (in rough order)

- Make **travel & accommodation arrangements** once the course is confirmed (usually 3 weeks before course date).
- Review your GFM **participant's manual** and **trainer's manual** and the notes you made as a participant and p/o
- Review **experience** you've had of using the methods since the course
- Consider your current strengths related to the course, trainer/facilitator competencies, and **what you'd like to learn**. Are you particularly interested in the methods? In training? In the group dynamics? In facilitation in general?
- Think about **which parts** of the course you're ready to take a training role on, and discuss with the lead trainer. A key question is: What do you feel ready for? We don't want you over-stretching yourselves, but neither do we want you feeling you've not done enough!
- Sessions/elements that new trainee trainers often lead on include:
 - 'Scramble' exercise in the Focused Conversation Method walkthrough (session 4)
 - feedback after one or more of the Focused Conversation Method and Consensus Workshop Method practice sessions
 - Session 10 - reflection at the end of day 1
 - Session 11 – opening of day 2
 - An energiser or game at some stage
 - Part of session 9 and/or session 17 (applications)
- On your **second** time as a trainee trainer, think about facilitating one of the demonstrations – you'll need to have done one to progress to co-trainer
- **Prepare** your sessions or elements as fully as you can – this will lead to a greater sense of ownership & greater confidence
 - read through notes thoroughly
 - highlight key words and/or rewrite them in your own words
 - rehearse in your mind and by walking & talking it through aloud

- where appropriate, collate/create your own visuals for the session
- Seek advice from other trainers and try ideas out with them, especially at the pre-course meeting

Things to Bring

- Your manuals
- Your preparation
- We'll have a table in the middle of the room with artefacts & things that are important to us, to please the eye & intrigue the mind. So feel free to bring along a couple of things to add to the display.

During the Course

- As with the p/o, the key is '**sensitive participation**'. Now, however, you're definitely part of the training team, so you'll be joining in less as a participant
- As before, observe throughout and take notes. Watch what the trainers do, and how they do it. Keep your eyes open for differences between different trainers in style and emphasis.
- Observe the participants also: how is their experience influenced by the trainers and how is it influenced by what they bring with them.
- Review the two methods again: are there any areas you're still unsure of?
- As before, participate fully in the practicalities of the course, which could include:
 - coffee cups, snacks etc – generally keeping the room looking good
 - writing flipcharts before sessions
 - setting up and packing away
- Participate fully in faculty meetings for planning & review – there's a lot to be learnt there (pre-course meeting, meeting after day 1, and a longer one after day 2 to review the course)
- Consider & discuss with faculty members how far to participate in Focused Conversation Method /Consensus Workshop Method demos
- Sit back in the talkthroughs
- Observe the practice preparation, help out if the other trainers agree
- As before, participate fully in practice conversations and workshops - you may be needed to make up the numbers.
- If you're ready, you may be asked to lead feedback after practice, so check the notes for that section and think about how you're going to do that

After the Course

- Review your experience (what happened? what did I do? Highs/lows? Learnings? What would I like to do at the next course? What should I do between now & then?)
- Share your feedback with the training team (it may be useful for the course report) and with your mentor
- Consider your next step on the Trainers' Journey!

Briefing Notes for a GFM Co Trainer

In order to be a Co-Trainer on a GFM, you need to:

- Have been a trainee trainer on a GFM at least twice i.e. completed at least 4 GFMs
- Have trained at least half the sessions at one time or another, including one demo and one walkthrough
- Be competent in all GFM-related ToP trainer competencies
- Self-assess that you are ready to progress to co-trainer status
- Have that self-assessment validated by your mentor and two GFM co- or lead- trainers who have worked with you

Overall Responsibility

As a co-trainer, you are now being paid for doing the course, so this implies a higher level of responsibility. Your responsibilities include:

- Working with the lead trainer and other faculty to plan all aspects of the course
- Training about 50% of the course
- Thorough planning & preparation of your sessions
- Monitoring the participants' experience
- Supporting the lead trainer

Before the Course (in rough order)

- Telephone conversation/planning meeting with lead trainer to assign sessions.
- Prepare the sessions you'll be leading. N.B. This may require some investment of time in the early stages. While experienced trainers will have the materials and much of the content in their minds, those training sessions for the first time may require longer to prepare both materials and mindset
- Arrive at the venue in good time to join in setting up and faculty meeting.

At the end of the course

- Participate in final faculty meeting
- Help clear up and pack

Lead Training together as a team

In certain circumstances, two co-trainers can lead a course together as a team, if they haven't enough experience to be lead trainers, have a track record of working well together and are seen as being strong enough as a team to fulfil the duties of the lead trainer outlined on the next pages. In general this situation will only arise exceptionally, e.g. when a lead trainer is not available or when the group being trained is known to and comfortable with at least one of the trainers. Ultimately the decision will lie with the trainers, their mentors, and the ICA:UK ToP Coordinator.

Briefing Notes for a GFM Lead Trainer

This list is not designed to be restrictive, but to help lead trainers (especially new ones) to identify their areas of responsibility. It is largely based on current practice by lead trainers.

In order to be a Lead Trainer on a GFM, you need to:

- Have been a co-trainer on a GFM at least twice ie completed at least 6 GFM's
- Have trained all the sessions at least once at one time or another
- Have considerable experience of facilitating using the methods
- Be able to coach/train other faculty members
- Show mastery of all GFM-related ToP trainer competencies
- Self-assess that you are ready to progress to lead trainer status
- Have that self-assessment validated by your mentor and two GFM lead trainers who have worked with you

Overall Responsibility

When working alone, you have responsibility for all aspects of the course, including:

- Curriculum/timetable
- Monitoring the participants' experience
- Practicalities & materials (in co-ordination with ToP co-ordinator and/or administrator)
- Liaison with venue staff

For first-time solo lead trainers, you may well want to ask your mentor or other Lead Trainers for support in the run-up to the course.

When working with a team, as the lead trainer for the course, you will still have responsibility for all the above and, in addition, for supporting, guiding and giving feedback to faculty members.

Before the Course (in rough order)

- Telephone conversation with ToP Co-ordinator to discuss faculty, participants, practicalities
- Arrange with Manchester office to send trainers' manuals to new co-trainers or trainee trainers who need them
- Telephone conversation/planning meeting with co-trainer to plan the course details, including assigning sessions, deciding Focused Conversation Method practice topics and so on
- Phone conversations with trainee trainers (if any) to discuss their level of involvement. These should happen when the course is confirmed (usually 3 weeks before) or earlier if you and the ICA:UK Administrator/Co-ordinator are confident the course will go ahead
- Draft an assignment sheet as a result of that conversation, and send to other faculty.
- Prepare the sessions you'll be leading
- Check Materials & Supplies checklist (page 4 of trainers' manual) to ensure you know who's bringing what (the Administrator will usually send manuals, evaluation forms, certificates, practice worksheets, pens, name labels)
- Contact venue a few days before the course to confirm numbers & diets for catering and accommodation, and room layout or ensure Administrator has done so
- Lead a faculty meeting immediately before the course (usually the evening before). Things to cover at this stage:
 - "Check signals" for day 1 (ie do we all know what we're doing and what each other are doing?). It's often helpful for less experienced faculty members to run through their sessions

in some detail at this stage, so you can check you're comfortable with what they're doing, and they can iron out any snags. Transitions between sessions/trainers are particularly important to plan

- Set up the room and/or discuss when & how that will happen
- Run through the final participants list, divide into groups for Focused Conversation Method practice

Supporting other faculty

For some lead trainers, this can be a difficult part of the job. It is also one of the most valuable. Remember how much useful input and advice you gained from other trainers along your journey? Now's your chance to help shape the next generation!

As there's currently no training of trainers course within the ICA:UK ToP programme, trainers learn how to train through their experience on the courses (as you probably did), through the processes of observation and making notes, trying things out, reflecting singly or together and reading up.

Here are some hints and tips on how to support your colleagues:

- make yourself available as much as you can, for questions, advice
- be in the room as much as you can when your colleagues are training, so you can monitor the sessions and make notes as necessary
- don't be afraid to make a contribution if a colleague has missed something important
- give feedback to your colleagues. Straight after a session the best thing to say is usually 'well done' any constructive criticism can be saved for later.
- remember when reflecting on the day, our usual practice is to allow the trainer who led the session to speak first, then feed in comments from other trainers. Don't stint on the positive feedback, and ensure your constructive criticism/hints and tips is backed up by examples, and is genuinely pointing the person towards some ways forward.
- Don't be afraid of feedback: a few well-chosen and well-timed comments from you can be very helpful in your colleagues' development as trainers.

During the course

- When not training a session, be present to monitor and support other trainers, step in and/or make input as necessary
- Take a lead in decisions to be made by faculty about practicalities, participants, curriculum, timing etc
- Lead a faculty meeting at the end of day 1, to include:
 - reflection on day 1 (participants, sessions)
 - feedback within the faculty team (how you do this will vary considerably from course to course, depending on the individuals involved)
 - arrange groups for Consensus Workshop Method practice
 - check Focus Questions for Consensus Workshop Method practice

At the end of the course

Suggested procedure for final faculty meeting:

- reflect on Day 2
- read through participants' evaluations together and pull out any common threads
- discuss together your experience of this course, including:

- the participants' group and their experience
- your experience of how the faculty team worked
- your experience of the curriculum, sessions & timing
- practicalities & venue
- Give & receive feedback with colleagues. You may find it hard to do this, but some considered comments by you can be very helpful in your colleagues' development
- You may want to use the draft feedback sheet to structure your conversation with the trainee trainer. If you do this, check before the course with the trainee trainer. You may want to ask a trainee trainer whether or not they're ready to be a co-trainer, and give your input on that question.
- Take notes during this discussion to feed into the course report
- Pack up the venue & thank the venue staff!

After the course

- Write up the course report, bearing in mind that the report should focus on the faculty's experience of the course just done, and that any conclusions or recommendations will be taken into consideration alongside other course reports.
- Send draft course report to faculty members for feedback. When finalised, send report to the ICA:UK Administrator/Coordinator
- Copy backs of participants' evaluation forms to co- and trainee trainers & self for continuing professional development
- Send originals of evaluation forms to ICA:UK Administrator/Coordinator