

SECTION 6, APPENDIX 2: CLINICAL SEMINARS - AIMS, CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Aims of clinical seminars

Clinical seminars offer a regular forum for trainees to present, discuss and reflect on the clinical work they are undertaking on placement. The aim is to encourage discussion of this material from a clinical and a professional perspective. The remit is broad, and topic areas include:

- the development of theory-practice links (identifying the ways in which psychological models and theories can help to understand the clinical material)
- the generation of hypotheses about the presentation and of potential formulations which could help to guide plans for intervention
- consideration of the social contexts and systems in which the client's presentation, referral and difficulties are located.
- consideration of the broader professional contexts within which casework takes place, and the impact of this on the presentation and the ways in which the intervention has progressed
- consideration of the acceptability of the intervention for service users and whether the service context itself might influence the ways in which clients present and respond to treatment
- consideration any professional and ethical issues raised by the casework, cross-referring to the HPC and BPS codes of conduct and ethical practice

While not all these topics will be considered in every seminar, the seminar group should hold them in mind and ensures that where pertinent to the case they are discussed in appropriate depth.

The overarching aim is to support trainees in their capacity to think deeply about clinical work. However, the intent is to complement but not to substitute for or conflict with, the supervision offered to the trainee on their placement. The seminars also give trainees an opportunity to practise formal clinical presentations and to develop their capacity to communicate complex clinical material in a clear and concise manner.

Content

Because trainees present clinical material from their current placement, over the course of the three years seminar content will encompass a wide range of clinical populations, clinical contexts and clinical approaches.

While there is no bar on presenting casework which is going well and which the trainee and their supervisor feel they understand well, the seminars are more likely to be productive if trainees present cases they experience as challenging in some respect, and can hence take advantage of the opportunity for in-depth discussion afforded by the seminar.

At all times trainees will need to abide by relevant Trust and professional codes and ensure that client confidentiality is preserved, where possible gaining formal consent for the presentation from relevant parties. At times consideration of these issues may need to become the focus of at least part of the seminar discussion.

Role of the facilitators

Each seminar group has two facilitators, one from within the course (usually a Clinical Tutor) and one a supervisor from the region (usually paired so as to be able to represent more than one clinical model or client group). Their role is to encourage and guide discussion in order to help the group achieve the learning aims outlined above. This may require them to be sensitive to the group process and to ensure that any potential barriers to open discussion (such as tensions between group members) are addressed and as far as possible resolved.

Structure of the Clinical Seminars

The way in which the seminar is structured and the number of presentations per seminar will be for the seminar group and facilitators to decide. However, case presentation should be fairly formal, including an outline of the case and relevant background details, along with an indication of the areas the presenter feels they would like to focus on (for example, a clinical dilemma, ethical issue, professional/team issues, general case formulation, or more specific formulation of an impasse, etc). Immediately after the seminar facilitators will give feedback to the presenter on their presentation skills.

Assessment

Although a compulsory element of the Course there is no formal evaluation of the trainee's contribution to the seminar.

Opportunities for feedback on, and review of, the seminar

At the end of each year seminar group members give formal feedback to the course and this is collated by the individual organising seminars, passed to the Academic Director and considered by the Curriculum Committee and the Course Monitoring Committee.

It makes sense for facilitators periodically to ask the group for comment on their experience of the seminar and its helpfulness and whether any changes are required in order to ensure that the group is functioning in a manner congruent with the seminar aims.