Some Suggestions for Optimizing and Continuing Training in a time of crisis

Introduction
EFTA Board and EFTA Training Standards subcommittee have decided that in these times of the Corona virus we have an important opportunity for sharing information on Training in Family Therapy. The current pandemic calls for EFTA to consider how best we can help our members and ourselves.
These brief points aim to initiate discussion and reflection on the developments and to facilitate to learn from each other across Institutes and countries.
We welcome and strongly encourage comments and proposals strengthening the EFTA voice during this crisis.

We have decided to focus mainly on discussing <u>the training implications of the current COVID-19 crisis</u>.

It is our hope that this initiative in time will develop into a rich platform for the family therapy training community to discuss responses to the corona crisis in the various training fields. We are confident that throughout Europe great innovations are developed, and EFTA is a platform where we can share.

Major challenges for Family Therapy Training
The continuity of the training and supervision process in the time of crisis is an important issue for many training institutes in Europe. Face-to-face training has always been at the core of psychotherapy training. Information sharing on how to find new ways is needed in the systemic community. We have to keep in mind:

- Campuses are closed. Confinement and lock-down lead to isolation. The maintaining of contact with our trainees – and between the trainees – is particularly important: Keep in touch!
- Various forms of online training have been and is still being developed.
- The context for our trainees and their families - and their responses to the crisis - have huge varieties. Online training must take the different realities into account.
- The possibilities for trainees to practice, to see clients, to do video recordings, to have local group supervision etc, may have been jeopardized. It may take longer to meet training standards.
- Reflecting processes in groups of trainees are a crucial part of training. Online training will have to develop creative ways of continuing these processes.
- Ethical issues like confidentiality and security are challenged by online training.

Steps towards suggestions for training (- and please supply with new ideas!)

1. When it is not possible to organize training and supervision otherwise, online training and supervision might be an alternative solution (Zoom, Skype for business, Teams, Canvas etc)
2. Synchronous and asynchronous online training

3. Formats:
   - Theoretical and practice-related lectures (asynchronous: powerpoint with video – synchronous: live streaming)
   - Clinical lectures with both online and written exercises (asynchronous: powerpoint with video – synchronous: live streaming)
   - Sharing of cultural and artistic experiences (synchronous or asynchronous)
   - Supervision in small groups with a trainer, synchronous.
   - Supervision in small groups on their own with exercises, asynchronous (see example in Appendix 1)
   - Literature groups on their own with exercises, asynchronous.
   - Debriefing sessions
   - Exchange of experiences
   - Trainees own collaboration groups and self-supervision groups
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4. Video-taped lectures should be divided into portions of maximum 20 minutes.
5. Invite experienced trainers from both your own country and internationally to offer brief, taped presentations with supportive texts, as materials to be discussed in an interactive format, online (see example in Appendix 1).
6. Ask our Training Institutes if they can offer and share their already existing training tapes.
7. Let us all share!

This situation has thrown us into learning new skills, and we all probably learn some different things. We should explore new advantages, for instance more international collaboration in supervision and training.

Much of what we are learning during these times will probably be included into our training curriculum, as working online will need to be a skill of every trainer, supervisor and therapist in the future.

However, when we return to a life which is a little more like the one, we were used to, face-to-face encounters between trainers and trainees, supervisors and supervisees, clients and therapists will again be the core value of our profession.

Please find enclosed some useful appendixes and links to resources, and please contribute with more. If you wish to comment or feedback on this document please email efta@scarlet.be and we will pass your feedback to the training standards committee.

LINKS:

Psychotherapy Net: https://www.psychotherapynetworker.org/

EAP: https://www.europsyche.org/

EFTA: https://europeanfamilytherapy.eu/

EFT training schools: https://efta-tic.eu/

APPENDIX 1

Supervision Exercise in a small group of 8 trainees, Online, asynchronous

You are invited to do this exercise at home, since Campus is temporarily closed due to the Corona virus pandemic. The exercise consists of both an individual contemplation and reflection, a reflection sharing with one or more fellow students, a response, and finally a collaboration on a shared reflection to the rest of the group and to the supervisor.

Themes: *Dialogical, circular and reflecting processes. Formation of hypothesis.*

Please look at these two video clips from YouTube, both with the Belgian therapist professor dr. Peter Rober:

1) «Things that are not said» - on silence, the unspoken and inner dialogues:
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXP5mbbyZYQ

2) On cultural differences and the common shared humanity in family therapy and systemic practices:
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0q41RO_ru4

Look at the first clip and write your reflections on a note. Then do the same after having looked at the next video clip. Finally write down some reflections on your impressions of the whole experience.

o Write about what you think these clips are all about and how they influence you, move you or what strikes you. Is there anything that wakes your curiosity, or something you keep on thinking about? Do you get any ideas on your own practice? What thoughts do you have if you position yourself with irreverence to what is being said in the clips? What are your thoughts on preconceptions / prejudices and hypotheses?

o Send your reflections to your fellow student(s) that you were given to reflect with. You will receive the same from that person (those persons).

o Write a response to what you received and send it back.

o Make contact with each other on Skype/Teams/Zoom or telephone, and reflect together on possible similarities and differences you might experience.

o Then write an individual draft each to what could be a common reflection and share it with each other. Work together until you reach a common final reflection from all of you and send it to the rest of the supervision group and to your supervisor. (E-mail addresses are provided).

    o   Your supervisor will then send a short response back to the supervision group.

We have made groups of two or three who will collaborate on this supervision. The first one on the list will be responsible for making contact and scheduling time for the common reflections together.

You decide for yourselves when and how you will meet, on phone, Skype, Zoom, Canvas or another convenient platform of communication.

Deadline for sending to the supervisor is: xx.xx.xx

APPENDIX 2

Planning Meetings Using Microsoft Teams

This can be adapted if other platforms are used – but many points in this overview remains useful.

INTRODUCTION The Doing Family Therapy Online / Remotely Using Technology series was created to support front-line therapists, trainers and managers to transition some of their work online during the pandemic period. It is up to each family therapist / trainer to evaluate the suitability of technologies, and to ensure that their use is both permitted by their organisation and does not lead to harm for individuals, families, communities or groups.

PREPARATION An effective online meeting begins with preparing for the meeting:

1. Microsoft Teams works best when you download the app to your device, rather than running Teams in an internet browser.

2. Ask delegates to join the meeting 10-15 mins early to problem solve and test their ability to join the meeting.

Key preparation items:

a) Where is the best quality internet signal and the most practical place in your building to join an online meeting? Run a speed test to check your device's internet speed: speedtest.net or fast.com. b) If you have a choice of Wi-Fi or connecting with a LAN (network) cable, always connect using the LAN cable.

c) If your broadband is slow, restart the router and/or internet fibre box before the meeting, and ask other household members to stay off the Wi-Fi for the duration of the online meeting, where practicable.

3. Send a reminder to delegates about the meeting a few days in advance: include a copy of the agenda, request that relevant delegates share documents in advance and provide instructions on how to join a Teams meeting. Many online meetings are delayed due to delegates not being able to find the join button in the Microsoft Teams calendar and problem-solving device / internet issues.

4. Delegates with newer devices can blur or change their background in Microsoft Teams to improve privacy.

5. Read the Data Protection national guidance on how to manage personal data when working remotely. One practical consideration is that if you are joining an online meeting and others can overhear the content, you should use headphones to reduce the risk of a data breach.

RUNNING THE MEETING How you set up and run the meeting on will depend on the purpose of the meeting and number of delegates.

All effective meetings begin with a clear agenda, items pre-allocated to delegates who should attend with tasks completed, minutes and to-do-items from the last meeting should be circulated in advance, and an effective chairperson should lead the meeting.

Facilitating participation in online meetings can be challenging as the usual inter-personal signals can be diminished or delayed, leading to meeting delegates talking over each other.

Large online meetings for information purposes can work well, but interactive meetings may work best with smaller numbers.

1. Ask delegates to mute their microphone (to limit background noise) upon joining the meeting. Colleagues who are new to online meetings may need a quick tutorial on key features of Microsoft Teams. Asking delegates to also turn off their video can help participants with slow broadband.

2. At the beginning of the meeting (depending on meeting size) ask delegates to introduce themselves or do a quick check-in with delegates (they may need to be reminded to turn on their microphone).

3. Key documents to read in advance of the meeting can be added in the Microsoft Teams meeting calendar entry.

4. The chairperson should explain the ground rules for the meeting and how the meeting will be run. It can take time to establish new norms and to develop skills for chairing and running online meetings. Try out a few models to see what works best for your team.

Ground rules usually include asking delegates to turn off their microphone after speaking, to close email and other apps that could be distracting, no mobile phones, to dress appropriately, to be aware of backgrounds, no food, to be present and participate, maintain eye contact, and to try to reduce background distractions, where practicable.

5. Chairpersons should be flexible and understanding with delegates with care responsibilities who are joining from home.

6. In Microsoft Teams, you can only see a grid of 4 (2x2) people on the screen at any one time (this is scheduled to change to a grid with 9 (3x3) participants in April/May 2020). In a meeting of 4 or less, a visual hand up can indicate to the chairperson that a participant wishes to contribute. In a larger meeting, this will not work as most delegates are off-screen. One solution is to ask meeting delegates to type their point(s) or question(s) into the conversation (chat) function – these can then be picked up by the meeting chairperson once the opportunity arises and delegates can be invited to speak to their point/question at an appropriate time.

 Microsoft is due to introduce a digital "hands up" feature to Teams this April/May.

7. If you are using Teams to record the meeting or are using the live captions (transcription) features for note-taking purposes, delegates should be advised that the meeting is being recorded.

8. The meeting chat or the meeting notes functions (click on the …) can be used to make live notes of key decisions and to-do-items.

Additional training on Microsoft teams
https://support.office.com/en-ie/article/microsoft-teams-video-training-4f108e54-240b-4351-8084-b1089f0d21d7

APPENDIX 3

How To Teach Online: Providing Continuity for Students - Free Online Course

Available: https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/teach-online

Discover practical ways to teach and support your students online
As the coronavirus pandemic spreads, there has been an increasing move towards teaching online as schools and universities shut.
Even for experienced practitioners, this situation presents challenges. However, with the right knowledge, you can overcome the hurdles presented by teaching online and embrace its possibilities.
On this course, you'll be given practical steps towards online teaching and student support. You can reflect on your own work, adapt your approaches, and share your stories with a global community of educators who'll help you to get started and keep going in uncertain times.

What topics will you cover?

- Getting started with online teaching
- Preparing your students for successful online learning
- Using tools designed for creating, sharing and re-mixing plans for learning
- Building and sharing a library of learning designs as a community of teachers
- Bringing lessons learned from teaching online into your everyday practice
- Collecting and responding to student feedback
- Reflecting on how we teach online and making iterative improvements
- Navigating the personal impact of teaching and learning online

APPENDIX 4

Tips for Teaching Online

https://hbsp.harvard.edu/inspiring-minds/8-tips-for-teaching-online

Online learning may be a more convenient way for the modern student to gain an education, but the effort instructors must invest in an online course can prove quite the opposite. We've learned through experience that online teaching can take lots of preparation time—perhaps far more than you would think.
But don't let that discourage you. Hard work up front pays off in later semesters. Here are eight intuitive but important tips for preparing, maintaining, and teaching online.

Preparing and Maintaining Your Online Course

1. Get to know your online learning management system (LMS) before students arrive.
   Just as it's important to be familiar with your physical surroundings while teaching in a classroom, you need to become comfortable with the LMS you use for your online class prior to the start of the course. Most systems have mechanisms set up to post your syllabus and assignments, interact with students one on one, and communicate with the entire class through a messaging or chat feature. Often you can frontload your work and schedule posts to become available within the LMS on certain days or at certain times. Knowing how to navigate the LMS your course resides in before it begins will make things much smoother throughout the semester as you can then focus on the students and their learning rather than technical glitches.
2. Make your LMS look professional and inviting.
   This might seem like a small detail compared to preparing a lecture or debriefing a case, but an electronic space can make as big an impact on a student as a physical space. As much as your LMS is customizable, spend a little time choosing how class materials are organized, a font that is professional and easy to read (pro tip: sans serif fonts are easier on the eye if you're reading on a screen), and clear navigational directions to get to the most important information. Your students shouldn't feel frustrated while simply trying to access the syllabus or communicate with each other about assignments.
3. Remember that electronic tools leave electronic traces and use this to your advantage.
   Because your course will be online, you will have an impressive log of information: when you post materials, how frequently you give assignments, which information students respond to best, which students are interacting most, how long it takes for discussions to start, how long discussions last, and so much more. Paying attention to these details and noticing patterns can help you course correct when needed throughout the semester.
4. Prepare your next course while teaching this one.
   Once you've set up a course in an online space, it will be incredibly easy to repeat it in subsequent semesters. As you find things that need to be altered throughout your class, make note of them so that you can actively change those things in the LMS ahead of teaching the course a second (or third or fourth) time. Assuming you keep on top of changes you'd like to make, each ensuing run of the course will take very little upfront work for you.

Teaching Your Online Course

1. Take advantage of asynchronous time.
   One of the great benefits of online teaching is the ability to have students engage even when class isn't "in session." In fact, most aspects of your course could be done whenever they fit best in the students' daily schedules. Watching recorded lectures, reading a case, playing certain simulations, and even responding to some discussion questions do not have to happen for the group all at once. Leaning heavily on asynchronous learning does mean you will want hard and clear
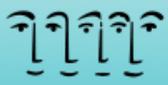
deadlines for certain things (such as discussion board participation), but ultimately it is a great tool for you and your students.

2. Emphasize the importance of synchronous time.
   If you are utilizing your LMS for a lot of asynchronous work, the occasional times you require the class to be in attendance together need to be worthwhile. Spending synchronous time on a lecture is wasteful and will frustrate students. Instead, use the time together to foster interaction and engage as a group. This could be a good time to debrief a particularly exciting simulation or make connections between a few different assignments to show a larger learning arc. Whatever you decide, make sure synchronous time is worth it to both you and your class, and communicate that to them ahead of time.

3. Ask good questions.
   In a physical classroom it is easy to see how engaged students are and how they react to discussion questions. Unfortunately, it is much more difficult to gauge their reactions in an online classroom. Because of this, it is important that you ask questions—whether in a synchronous discussion or on a class discussion board—that are engaging and can spark complex conversation. Vary the types of questions you ask, and try to make them as immersive as you can. Intentionally provocative questions can also be useful, as they tend to instigate lively discussion.

4. Watch student engagement and adjust for better participation.
   In an online setting, it can be easy for timid or passive students to hide in the back while others take up all the discussion time. There are many ways to help students speak up in an online class aside from cold calling during synchronous discussions. Vary the time of day you post topics to the discussion boards so that there are more opportunities for different students to get the conversations rolling. Rotate through your class list who can post first when a discussion begins. Reach out to some of the students individually ahead of time and ask them to engage about a particular point. Just like in a traditional classroom, when all of the students are participating and engaged the discussion and learning experience becomes richer for everyone.

Online teaching offers a way to reach many students who otherwise could not participate. The field is open for innovation, and you may well be able to discover ways of effective teaching online that other instructors have not thought of before.

Best of all: Though it might be a lot of work up front, almost everything you do is reusable—also across courses—resulting over time in a very good and personal infrastructure for online teaching.

This article was adapted from "[Teaching with Cases Online](#)," published by Harvard Business Publishing.

APPENDIX 5

An example of INFORMATION *SPECIFIC TO ONLINE THERAPY SESSIONS*

We are asking our clients to re-contract for online therapy sessions. This is because there are differences in the setup and the process and in particular, challenges to confidentiality that need to be considered.

Zoom will be used for the remote sessions. The therapist will send a Zoom invite to the client via email. It is important that the client does not forward or send that invite to any other party as this could breach the confidentiality of the session.

The client is responsible for securing their own phone/computer hardware, internet access points and password security. We ask that our clients download Zoom using a computer if possible but if not a smartphone and get used to using the application before their first session.

Confidentiality

Zoom has end to end encryption and it is recommended by several psychotherapy professional bodies. Nevertheless it is important that you are aware of and accept the element of insecurity in relation to the confidentiality of information that is beyond the control of both therapist and client.

The Therapist cannot take responsibility for client's equipment failure e.g. camera, speaker/mic and/or internet service or for lapse's in confidentiality that are in direct response to the client's actions. Please make sure that you are in a quiet confidential room where you cannot be overheard and you will not be interrupted.

Therapists and Clients are not allowed to make an audio or video recording of any portion of the session.

Confidentiality and GDPR

As with face to face therapy, the same GDPR regulations will apply to any information shared during the course of online or phone therapy.

The laws that protect the confidentiality of any data shared will still apply. Information about the client will only be released with the client's express written consent, with the exceptions of the following situations which are in line with current legislation re Child Protection and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults: If the therapist determines a risk of self harm / risk to suicide; If the therapist determines a risk of harm to others; If the therapist is informed about or suspects abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult.

Disconnection Problems

If video services are not available due to an unplanned equipment or service malfunction, sessions will either be conducted over the phone [if viable] or will be reschedule. If a

technology breakdown occurs before or during the course of a session, Therapist and Client will agreed to try to reconnect after 5 minutes. If reconnection is not possible the Therapist will phone the client and will either continue the session over the phone [if viable] or reschedule.

Risk of Harm

Online therapy is not suitable for high conflict or crisis situations, it is not an emergency service.

All Clients will be asked to provide the name and phone number of someone who the Therapist can contact if risk concerns arise during or after the session. It is the responsibility of the client to inform their therapist if there is a risk of harm to self or others. Should a high level of risk emerge the client will be referred to their GP or Emergency Services and agree to make contact with their pre-arranged contact [see below] to ensure their safety.

General

We recommend that you spend some time before each session setting yourselves up, it is important to be on time and to ensure you are familiar with the equipment and the process.   The following guidelines might be helpful.

Before the session please make sure that all your equipment is working and no-one else in the household is using the internet. If there is more than one person in the session please make sure that all of you are visible and close enough to the microphone to be heard.

It is helpful to remove any distractions: take pets out of the room; put your mobile phones on silent; ensure there are no sounds from adjoining rooms and that no-one will interrupt you. Make sure you are comfortable; you might want to have water/tissues near you. Try as much as you can to replicate the environment where you would have had your face to face sessions.

Client Name: _____

Mobile Phone number for contact if required during the session: _____

Emergency Contact

Name: _____ Contact Number: _____

GP Name:

_____

GP Contact Details:

_____

By signing below (or sending written confirmation via email attaching this completed form), I confirm that I/We have read the above information and understand my rights and obligations in relation to online/telephone therapy as described above.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____