

BASIC GROUP

The Basic Group is designed for applicants who are new to Gestalt Therapy or who have limited post-graduate training in Gestalt Therapy. Many Basic Group members function as high-level professionals in their own disciplines, and many come to our training with years of useful and relevant experience in related fields. They are not, however, familiar with Gestalt Theory as it applies either to clinical psychotherapy or to other professional work with individuals and groups.

In addition, the Basic Group is an excellent starting place for becoming familiar with the demanding schedule of our European Summer Residential workshop. Much of the training that is available for busy professionals takes place over weekends or a three to four day format. The Summer training provided in this workshop requires seven full hours of work daily for six days over a nine day period; the work includes experiential and didactic components within the group setting, and it also includes small group work for practice in applying the theoretical principles being presented and observed as well as the opportunity to have a 40-minute session of individual psychotherapy from a member of the Clinical Practicum or the Trainers Group (clinicians working at very advanced levels of training). One training goal for participants in the Basic Group, therefore, is the development of personal support that will enable them to work as client and therapist in both the large and the small group formats and to interact in the group setting with a minimum of defensiveness.

Another training goal for participants who work at this level in the workshop is the development of a good basic theoretical background in Gestalt Therapy theory. Because Gestalt Theory focuses on complex, interwoven processes in regard to the field, the individual and their interactions, the concepts are demanding. Lectures and theory presentations are specifically designed for the needs of this group, although on some days all groups will come together for theory demonstrations. Careful attention is paid in the Basic Group to looking carefully at all work done in the group from the perspective of clarifying the application of Gestalt Theory to the practice of Gestalt Therapy. The training faculty have found that one of the most significant factors in developing strong therapeutic skills in training is to have a strong foundation in theory as the basis for working with clients; therefore, theoretical instruction at this level is crucial for rapid advancement to higher levels of training.