Assessing and Formulating Personality Disorder: Facilitator Pack

THE TALKING THERAPIES UK FACILITATOR PACKS



Assessing and Formulating Personality Disorder: Facilitator Pack

Teaching the course to a group

A facilitator pack · 3 sessions · for trainers

TALKING THERAPIES UK

First edition · 2026

Published by Talking Therapies UK, talkingtherapies.co.uk.

Copyright © 2026 Talking Therapies UK. All rights reserved.

The moral right of the author has been asserted. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations in a review, and except that the licensee may copy the session plans, the attendance register and the evaluation form for the groups they run.

First edition, 2026.

This pack accompanies the course “Assessing and Formulating Personality Disorder” on Talking Therapies UK Training & CPD and its course book. It is drawn from the course and is kept current with it: whenever the course changes, the pack is set again.

This printing was set on 27 October 2026 from the course as it stood that day.

A note on teaching from this pack. It supports qualified trainers and supervisors teaching within their competence. Running the course from it does not award the course’s CPD certificate, which participants gain by completing the course online.

Set in Poppins and Roboto, the Talking Therapies UK typefaces.

Contents

How to use this pack 1

Part 1 Planning the course 3

1. About Assessing and Formulating Personality Disorder 4
2. Planning the sessions 5

How to use this pack

This pack is for trainers and supervisors who teach the Talking Therapies UK course “Assessing and Formulating Personality Disorder” to a group: a session for each of its 3 modules, with timed plans, the points to draw out, group activities and discussion questions, the course’s assessment with answers, an attendance register and an evaluation form.

Part 1 sets out the course and how to plan it. Part 2 has a timed plan for each session, built from the course’s own modules, lessons and practice tasks; read it with the module it teaches. Part 3 holds the course’s assessment with its answers, an attendance register and an evaluation form.

What this pack covers

- Plan the course as 3 sessions
- Follow a timed plan for each session
- Draw out each lesson’s key points
- Run each lesson’s practice task as a group activity
- Check understanding with the course’s own questions
- Keep a register and gather evaluations

PART 1

Planning the course

What the course covers, who it is for, and how to run it.

CHAPTER 1

About Assessing and Formulating Personality Disorder

Assessment is where personality disorder care either becomes therapeutic or repeats the harm, and this course teaches it as a craft in its own right. Built on the ICD-11 dimensional model, it trains you to assess severity and trait presentation rigorously, to read the assessment relationship itself as data, and to formulate in a way the person can recognise, use and keep.

The first module works the dimensional assessment at practitioner depth: structuring the interview, rating severity from functioning and consequence rather than drama, eliciting the trait picture through lived episodes, and conducting the whole process as a therapeutic act, because people with these histories have usually been assessed often and helped rarely, and the difference is in the conduct. The second module takes on the territory services most often get wrong: risk assessed and formulated without exclusion, chronic and acute-on-chronic patterns distinguished, protective factors audited honestly, and power, stigma and cultural context written into the formulation rather than around it. The course closes with the shared formulation itself: co-written, staged, bearable, and precise enough to route treatment to the person's actual severity and stage.

Substantial written lessons with key points and practice tasks that build real assessment craft, with a study tutor throughout, a final assessment, and a personalised certificate on passing. For practitioners who want their assessments to be the beginning of treatment rather than the gate in front of it.

By the end of the course, participants will be able to

- Assess personality difficulty with structured tools alongside clinical interview
- Distinguish personality-level difficulty from mood, trauma and neurodevelopmental presentations that mimic it
- Formulate using severity, traits, attachment style and relational patterns together
- Assess and formulate risk, including chronic suicidality, without reflex escalation
- Share a personality-difficulty formulation with the client compassionately and usefully
- Write formulations that help teams hold, rather than reject, the client

Who it is for

The course is pitched at practitioners with a foundation in the subject who want to apply it with more confidence.

At a glance

- 3 sessions of about 195 minutes, one for each of the course's modules.
- The online course is accredited for 10 hours of CPD.
- Each participant needs the course book, or access to the online course, for reading between sessions.

CHAPTER 2

Planning the sessions

Run one session for each module, a week or a fortnight apart, so that participants can read the module and try its practice task between sessions. The sessions can also be run as a block over two or three days.

OVERVIEW

The course at a glance

Session	Module	Lessons	Time
1	Part 1: Conducting a dimensional assessment	4	195 minutes
2	Part 2: Triangulation and the Dynamic Formulation: Synthes	5	195 minutes
3	Part 3: From Shared Formulation to Collaborative Risk Mana	5	195 minutes

The group

- Six to sixteen participants: enough for small-group work, few enough for everyone to contribute.
- Agree ground rules at the first session: confidentiality, respect for different experience, and how participants will speak about their own clients (with nothing that could identify them).
- Ask before the course about access needs, and send any reading a week ahead.

What you need

- A copy of this pack, and the course book or the online course for each participant.
- A flipchart or whiteboard, and space for groups of three or four to work.
- Printed copies of the attendance register and the evaluation form in Part 3, which you may copy for the groups you run.

Keeping it safe

Training about psychological difficulties can bring up participants' own experience. Say at the start that anyone may step out, have someone available to talk to afterwards, and know where to point a participant who is struggling: their GP, their own supervisor or employee assistance programme, or Samaritans on 116 123.