Complex PTSD and Specialist Trauma Populations: Facilitator Pack

THE TALKING THERAPIES UK FACILITATOR PACKS



Complex PTSD and Specialist Trauma Populations: Facilitator Pack

Teaching the course to a group

A facilitator pack · 4 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 “Complex PTSD and Specialist Trauma Populations” 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.

Revision 2. This printing was set on 10 November 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 Complex PTSD and Specialist Trauma Populations 4
2. Planning the sessions 6

How to use this pack

This pack is for trainers and supervisors who teach the Talking Therapies UK course “Complex PTSD and Specialist Trauma Populations” to a group: a session for each of its 4 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 4 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 Complex PTSD and Specialist Trauma Populations

This advanced training module provides an in-depth exploration of Complex PTSD and the nuanced presentations often arising from developmental trauma. Moving beyond standard PTSD, the curriculum delves into the DSM-5-TR and ICD-11 criteria, specifically focusing on the profound disturbances in self-organisation that characterise CPTSD. Learners will examine how early relational trauma disrupts the development of affect regulation, self-concept, and interpersonal functioning, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the neurobiological and psychological mechanisms underpinning these complex presentations.

A central component of this course is the detailed examination of the phased approach to treatment, a critical framework for managing the heightened risks associated with complex trauma. Participants will study the stabilisation phase, which establishes safety and containment, and the subsequent trauma processing stages, ensuring they are equipped to handle the intense emotional and physiological arousal that can arise during therapy. This section emphasises the importance of pacing and the use of evidence-based interventions tailored to the unique needs of clients with complex histories.

The course further extends its scope to specialist populations, offering specialised insights into the trauma experiences of military personnel, medical professionals, and first responders. By analysing the specific stressors inherent in these high-stakes environments, including moral injury and exposure to critical incidents, clinicians will learn to adapt their therapeutic approach to resonate with these specific cultural and occupational contexts. This module addresses the unique challenges of treating individuals whose professional roles involve high levels of responsibility and exposure to human suffering.

Additionally, the training addresses the intersection of trauma with relational dynamics and identity. Clinicians will explore how complex trauma impacts attachment styles, parenting capabilities, and a client's sense of self, providing the tools necessary to support clients in rebuilding healthy relationships and integrating a coherent identity. The curriculum also covers the critical clinical skills required to manage dissociation and other complex symptom clusters, alongside essential guidance on maintaining therapist sustainability and preventing burnout when working with highly distressed clients.

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

- Adapt trauma-focused work for complex PTSD: phasing, titration and relational repair
- Treat multiple-event and developmental trauma without endless stabilisation
- Work with dissociation, including flashback management and grounding protocols, at specialist level
- Address perpetrator-related presentations, moral injury and traumatic bereavement
- Adapt practice for refugees, veterans, emergency workers and abuse survivors

- Sustain yourself in high-exposure work: vicarious trauma as an occupational hazard to manage

Who it is for

The course is pitched at experienced practitioners working with complex presentations, who already use the approach in their practice.

At a glance

- 4 sessions of about 210 minutes, one for each of the course's modules.
- The online course is accredited for 14 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	Foundations and Neurobiology of Complex PTSD	5	210 minutes
2	Phase-Based Clinical Interventions for Complex PTSD	5	210 minutes
3	Specialist Populations and High-Status Trauma Dynamics	5	210 minutes
4	Intersectionality and High-Risk Trauma Work	5	210 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.