



## FAQs, Competencies, Objectives – Focusing Basics



[www.ruthhirsch.com](http://www.ruthhirsch.com)

### **Focusing Basics Course**

This is a foundation course that will provide a basic solid understanding of Focusing, and the ability to begin to use Focusing for yourself and with a partner. The equivalent of Level One and Level Two Inner Relationship Focusing Training, it is the pre-requisite for advanced Focusing study.

#### **The coursework includes:**

- History and Philosophy of Focusing
- Finding and relating to a Felt Sense
- The Focusing Attitude
- The Inner Relationship and how to best nurture, maintain, and when necessary, heal this relationship
- Empathic Listening: to facilitate your own Focusing process as well as that of another Focuser
- Advanced Listening techniques to further deepen Focusing for yourself and others
- Introduction to Focusing Guiding, for working with those not trained in Focusing

### **What is included in the Focusing Basics Course?**

- An Individual Guided Focusing session prior to beginning the group course
- Eight class sessions. Each class meets once a week, for 2 1/2 hours, with a short break during this time. Total class time: 20 hours
- 136 page Training Manual (pdf format) plus additional exercises and handouts
- Classes will be recorded. Links to recordings will be provided within 24 hours of each class session
- To optimize learning, class size is limited.
- Time in each class for questions & answers
- Email support between class meetings

### **Total Time Commitment**

- One hour for Initial Guided Focusing session with Trainer

- 20 hours class time
- Focusing practice between class sessions is up to trainee. A minimum of one hour week is suggested to optimize learning
- Minimal reading assignments- Estimated to be under 30 minutes/week

• **What is the goal of this course?**

Participation in the program will provide you with a basic understanding of Focusing, and the ability to use Focusing by yourself and with a partner. The understanding you gain about Focusing will positively affect other aspects of your life. This course is the pre-requisite for advanced Focusing study.

In addition, participation in this course allows you to be eligible for the International Focusing Institute's Proficiency as Focusing Partner award. Please see [http://www.focusing.org/proficiency\\_as\\_focusing\\_partner.html](http://www.focusing.org/proficiency_as_focusing_partner.html) for more information.

• **Just what is Focusing?**

The short answer is that Focusing is a tool to help us find what is alive in us. It is distinguished from other forms of inner relationship approaches to healing and growth by the felt sense, the body's way of manifesting the gestalt of some issue. For those who might like a longer answer, please read on.

Focusing is a process of allowing what is true for us, at levels deeper than what might immediately bubble up into conscious awareness. We do this by becoming aware of our bodies – of what wisdom, or truth, is literally embodied within us.

Finding what is alive in us doesn't necessarily mean what is happy and vibrant, but rather, what it is that is actually living within us. Some of what is living within us could actually be sapping our vitality, while other aspects could have the potential of bringing more aliveness into our lives than we might ever have imagined.

Focusing is an art in which we become aware that reality holds much more possibility and beauty than we might have believed. With Focusing we no longer see one, or two, or more aspects of ourselves as who we are. Rather, we begin to understand that the truth of who we are is so much more vast, so much more exciting, so much more alive than we had previously suspected.

Focusing involves a shift in our typical way of thinking and feeling– our tendency to push ourselves, to rush, to try to make things happen. We must slow down, and pause. With the usual pace of our lives we miss much that is precious. As one colleague put it, "Focusing is a process that takes us much more deeply into life."

Focusing offers a safe space, a container that at times can feel womb-like, where what is true can begin to emerge into consciousness. When we Focus, we make space for what is true for us *now*, in the present moment.

• **Are there pre-requisites to participating in this course?**

No, the course is intended for beginners, and those wishing an in-depth review of the basics. The only precondition is that the private Guided Focusing session with the trainer be scheduled and completed prior to the start of the course. This session is included in the fee for the program.



- **Who can benefit from this course?**

Anyone with a sincere interest in personal growth and healing who is willing to make a commitment to the program can benefit from it. The program is open to both laypeople and healing professionals (Therapists, Coaches, Body Workers and other Healing Arts professionals.)

- **What time is this in my time zone?**

Please see [www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/) to figure out exactly what time 10 am - 12:30 pm Eastern U.S. Time is where you live. Feel free to email us for help with this.

- **How does this course correspond to other Inner Relationship Focusing Courses?**

The course combines and integrates Levels One and Two.

- **What is the next step after this course?**

This course will allow you to have your own Focusing practice, and to use Focusing in your daily life and work. It will provide a foundation of knowledge and skills that are invaluable on their own, and form an excellent foundation for those wishing to use Focusing in a professional capacity.

For those wishing to further deepen their understanding of Focusing, and to learn skills needed to integrate Focusing into your coaching, psychotherapy or other healing practice, or simply to expand your understanding and skills, the next step is the Advanced Focusing Training Program.

- **When will the next Intermediate Advanced Focusing Training Course be offered and what will it include?**

For the exact dates of the next Intermediate Advanced Focusing Training Course, please see [www.focusing.org/aft](http://www.focusing.org/aft) . This course meets weekly for 8 sessions of 2 ½ hours each. The program includes an 8 week course, consultation time within the class sessions, The Advanced Focusing manual, and additional Exercises and handouts. The fee is the same as for the Focusing Basics Program.

- **What's the background of the trainer?**

Ruth Hirsch, MSW, MPH, CMP ([www.ruthhirsch.com](http://www.ruthhirsch.com)) is a Focusing Oriented Psychotherapist and Certified Focusing Trainer. In addition, she:

- teaches and supervises psychotherapists and others in the healing professions in how to use Focusing in their practice;
- has masters degrees in Social Welfare and Public Health, is certified in massage and acupressure therapy and in teaching yoga. She specializes in teaching Focusing to Healing professionals and all those who want to make the world a better place;
- has over 24 years experience teaching Focusing and using Focusing in her practice;
- currently has a private practice where she works in person in Jerusalem, and internationally via phone, Skype, and Zoom. She has been teaching and working with clients by phone since 2001;
- loves to travel internationally to bring Focusing to teach Focusing;

• is an active member of the International Leadership Council of The International Focusing Institute. She specializes in balancing and bringing peace and insight to body, mind, heart and spirit, and delights in sharing Focusing with others as an individual life-enhancing practice, and as an adjunct to enhance the work of other healing professions. For more info about Ruth and her work, please visit [www.ruthhirsch.com](http://www.ruthhirsch.com)

**•What, specifically, will be taught?**

In the first half course you will learn the basics of Focusing. With these, you will:

- understand what Focusing is, and how it can benefit your life;
- learn what a felt sense is and how to find one;
- learn how to listen within;
- be able to Focus by yourself and with a partner.
- learn how to be a supportive listener to someone who is Focusing in a way that will deepen their Focusing.

In the second half of the course you will deepen your skills as a Focusing companion for yourself and others. In this part you will:

- become more competent in your own Focusing;
- learn advanced empathic listening techniques;
- begin to learn guiding techniques to help to deepen the Focuser's process, and to work with those not yet trained in Focusing;
- learn how to prevent overwhelm;
- learn how to work with the inner critic
- learn how to create a deeper, more nurturing inner relationship for yourself and for your Focusing partner.

**• Will there be time for practice during the classes?** Yes! The experiential dimension is an important part of the course. In addition, classes will include lectures, demonstrations, and discussion.

**For more information: Please email [ruth@ruthhirsch.com](mailto:ruth@ruthhirsch.com)**

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## Competencies

### I. The Ability to Focus

- Understanding that Focusing is an inner relationship.
- Being able to bring awareness into the body, especially torso area.
- Being able to find a felt sense about an issue.
- Being able to find a felt sense without specifying the issue in advance. (What wants my awareness now?)
- Knowing that a felt sense is different from an emotion and from mental activity.
- Being able to hold an accepting attitude toward inner experience, or to notice when you can't be accepting.
- Knowing what to do when you can't hold a facilitating attitude.
- Being able to acknowledge your inner experience.
- Being able to find a "right" distance if something is too close.
- Being able to describe a felt sense.
- Being able to check or resonate the description with the body sense, and to check other meanings that come.
- Being able to sit with the felt sense with a curious, interested attitude, and ask it questions if necessary without answering the questions mentally.
- Being able to receive new and positive awareness when it comes.
- Knowing about the commonest blocks to Focusing, such as when you have something inside that is being critical, doubting, fearing, fixing, imposing, forcing a choice, or in some way attempting to manipulate the process as opposed to being with what is there, and being able to recognize and acknowledge this when it comes.
- Being able to create a "fence" around what has come in order to protect it.
- Being able to Focus alone, and knowing techniques to enhance this.

### II. The Ability to Listen (Basic)

- Being able to be deeply present with another person who is Focusing.
- Being able to give listening reflections, some word-for-word and some paraphrasing, without asking questions, leading, or interpreting.
- Being aware that the Focuser is in charge of the Focusing/listening exchange
- Including the Focuser in the reflection (i.e. "You're sensing," "You're realizing.")
- Being able to help the Focuser to "dis-identify" (i.e. By using "a part of you," or "something in you.")
- Being able to notice when something inside you is in the way of being able to listen to a Focuser, and knowing what to do about this.
- Knowing how to be present to oneself and to inwardly acknowledge one's own feelings while

listening to another.

### **III. The Ability to take part in a Focusing partnership**

- As a Focuser, being able to tell a Listener how you would like to be listened to.
- As a Listener, being aware that the *focuser* is in charge of the Focusing/listening exchange.
- As a Focuser, being able to use listening responses to check what has come inside.
- As a Focuser, being able to give feedback to a listener, to say when a listening response is not right or only partly right, and to use that not-quite-right to sense what is right instead.
- Being able to have a successful experience of focusing partnership.

### **IV. The Ability to Listen (Advanced)**

- Being able to respond to what true for the focuser in present time (vs. past).
- Responding to what's there rather than what's not there.
- Not reflecting doubts or what's not known.
- Using "something" to respond to what's not yet specified.

## **Course Objectives**

1. State how I can use Focusing to address practical issues in my life.
2. Describe what a felt sense is
3. Explain how to find a felt sense
4. Explain what the "Focusing Attitude is"
5. Demonstrate using empathic listening to facilitate the Focusing process
6. Explain how Focusing differs from other psychological approaches
7. Demonstrate using Focusing to work with the inner critic
8. Demonstrate the use of Focusing suggestions to help disidentify from difficult emotions
9. State that I had the opportunity to practice the technique during the workshop

## **References**

### **References**

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Krycka, K. & Ikemi, A. (2016): Focusing-Oriented-Experiential Psychotherapy: From Research to Practice In Cain, D., Keenan, K. & Rubin, Shawn (Eds.) *Humanistic Psychotherapies: Handbook of Research and Practice* 2nd Edition, Washington DC, American Psychological Association, pp. 251-282.

Ikemi, A. (2014): *A Theory of Focusing Oriented Psychotherapy in Theory and Practice of Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy: Beyond the Talking Cure* Ed. Greg Madison, London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers (April, 2014)



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## **Some examples of unsolicited feedback received**

*It is really a pleasure to know and work with you... You are a wonderful teacher and model for the Focusing process and also for the kind of person we should all strive to be. open, willing to look at ourselves honestly and make the necessary adjustments, very giving to others, able to create a safe and supportive environment in which to share, learn, and grow, and the list goes on.*

*RT, Jerusalem*

*I have been blessed to be mentored by Ruth in the teaching of Focusing and application of Focusing to all kinds of life and professional challenges. She is a very warm and ethical person, possesses a wealth of knowledge and expertise, holds to high standards in all she does, and teaches with a style that is practiced, patient and very personable. The list of what I have learned from her is very long and only exceeded by the gratitude I feel to her for teaching me. I recommend her without qualification to colleagues, friends and anyone who might wish to work with her.*

*NR, Chicago*

*I learned such an amazing amount in such a short time and it happened so naturally, organically, I have to say in such a focusing kind of way. As if I'd turn around and go, WOW, I learned so much! When/how did that happen? Almost seemed effortless! I just wanted to say a real heartfelt thank you.*

*CR, North Dakota*

*I can never say thank you enough for what I have learned of the Focusing process through Ruth.... And I am so grateful to you and for this process, and for the companions who were with me when I Focused. What a gift! I got to experience pain and sadness and feel \*WHOLE\*!!!! instead of broken. I got to \*experience\* (not just intellectually conceptualize) loving feelings toward myself.*

*SB, Canada*

*I just want you to know that I'm incredibly grateful for the training sessions, and for your skills as guide, teacher, and facilitator. I've gotten so much out of it – and continue to.... thanks again – so much. I hope many more people find their way to you!*

*Many blessings!*

*KP, Michigan*

*It was AMAZING this morning. I just love this stuff - and the way you teach it. You're both knowledgeable and modest -- and gentle -- and sensitive -- actually all the ways we called out during the "creature" exercise. I loved every single exercise and experience. Looking forward to this journey.*

*RM, Jerusalem*