



Schema therapy for couples (ST-C)

How to submit your session recording(s) to be rated and prepare your application for certification

1. Preparing to apply for certification

The formal requirements for ST-C certification are set out in the document *ISST Training and Certification in Schema therapy for couples (ST-C), 1. Minimum Requirements for certification* available from <http://www.schematherapysociety.org/page-18350>. The requirements include basic training in Schema Therapy (which can be in the form of your already being certified as a schema therapist with the ISST) as well as requirements for ST-C workshop training, ST-C Educational consultation and implementation of ST-C with couples in your practice.

In order to apply for ST-C certification you must be recommended by an ST-C Educational Consultant/Trainer who knows your work. At the Standard level, the consultant must have listened to/watched and given you feedback on at least 2 of your couples session recordings. At Advanced level, the consultant must have listened to/watched and given you feedback on at least 4 of your couples session recordings. In recommending you, the Educational Consultant is indicating to the ST-C Committee that s/he believes you have achieved the required standard of training.

Once your Educational Consultant/Trainer has agreed to recommend you, you must submit one (Standard certification) or two (Advanced certification) recordings of your work in couples therapy for evaluation and rating. These should normally be video recordings though at Standard level audio recordings may be accepted on request. You must achieve mean scores of the required standard (4.0 for Standard, 4.5 for Advanced). For Advanced level, you must submit two recordings. The recording you submitted for Standard Level certification may count provided it received a rating of 4.5 or above.

Submission of session recording(s) for rating

The rating of applicants' session recordings is arranged by the ST-C Committee (there is more information about this below). You need to prepare the following for submission:

- 1.1. Personal background information.** Provide your name, level of requested certification (Standard, Advanced), age and a statement that you are certified as a schema therapist with the ISST, and/or have completed the workshop training and educational consultation requirements for the requested level of ST-C.
- 1.2. Couples therapy session recording.** Provide a video recording (audio is acceptable at Standard level) of a couples therapy session from your own practice of 45 to 60 minutes in length. This could be a whole session, or a segment from a session if the

session is longer than 60 minutes. It is recommended that you choose a couple with whom you have had at least 6 sessions as the selected session needs to illustrate some of the processes that are distinctive to ST-C. For advanced level, your facility with a complex case (e.g. complex trauma, rigid personality traits, substance abuse, and/or a personality disorder) has to be demonstrated. In addition you will need to know the partners well enough to provide a case conceptualization (using the format described below).

Choose a session that illustrates all or most of the following:

- Working with the interaction between the two members of the couple in which you, for example, de-escalate conflict, encourage empathy of one partner for another, or promote emotion-focused responding between them.
- Use of emotion-focused experiential techniques such as guiding one or both partners to focus somatically and identify emotional states, using imagery to identify emotions and connect them to childhood memories, helping one partner recognize and empathize with the Vulnerable Child in the other, use dialogues with multiple chairs to identify and separate out coping and/or parent modes from Angry or Vulnerable Child states.
- Working to identify, name and/or bypass coping modes that are interfering with empathic engagement between the partners.
- Demonstrating and working with the basic mode cycle clash in the area of coping modes.
- Re-parenting of one or both partners by the other partner.

1.3. Background information about the couple. For each of the members of the couple, whose session you are submitting for evaluation, provide their name (first names are enough), age, marital status, education, occupation, DSM-5 or ICD-10 diagnoses, and evaluation of the overall level of functioning of each.

1.4. Case conceptualization. In order to contextualize the session, provide a case conceptualization that covers the following points:

- **For each partner**, a paragraph summarizing the central motivation of each party for seeking couples therapy, including explicit expectations with regard to outcome.
- **For each partner**, a paragraph summarizing salient aspects of their history, including nature of relationships in family of origin and specific disruptive or traumatic events during childhood or subsequently.
- **For each partner** a summary of Early Maladaptive Schemas (EMSs) that you have identified (if appropriate with related beliefs or behavioural expressions)
- **For each partner** a summary of the significant modes, in which you provide information about the characteristics of
 - The main Child modes (Vulnerable, Angry etc) that you could link to the EMSs you have identified,
 - Parent modes

- Prominent coping modes categorized under the headings, Surrender, Avoidant and Overcompensation.
- **Mode clash analysis:** Set out how you understand the conflicts or difficulties of the couple in terms of a mode clash (i.e. how you understand them to be caught up in interacting through coping modes in a way that exacerbates conflict and undermines intimacy). You could do this by presenting schema mode maps for each partner or using the mode clashcard format (available from the website). Provide a brief explanation of how you understand these clashes in mode terms.
- **Goals of therapy:** Explain how you understand the goals of therapy in schema and mode terms with particular reference to de-escalating conflict, bypassing coping modes, promoting emotional connection and building intimacy and authentic communication. You can summarize how you see the obstacles to achieving these goals and the tasks you understand that need to be tackled.

1.5. Contextualization of the session: Write a few paragraphs in which you explain the process of the therapy so far, how this led to what is happening in the session you have chosen, how you understood what you were trying to facilitate during the course of the session and how this fits in with the goals for therapy as set out above.

1.6. Evaluation of the session. Evaluate the session in terms of how it went, the strong points in terms of how well you were able to work towards specific goals, the difficulties you encountered and your understanding of what this means for the therapy going forward.

Once you have prepared these documents, submit them with the recording(s) to the Chairperson of the ST-C Committee. This position is currently held by Dr Chiara Simeone-DiFrancesco (chiaradifrancescophd@gmail.com). Inform her by email of your intention to submit your session recording(s) for evaluation and she will discuss with you options for submitting the recording by mail or electronically. A charge is made for the evaluation of recordings (which would normally take the evaluator about 2 hours). Because of differences in currencies and exchange rates, the charge varies depending on the country in which the applicant lives and works, and is negotiated between the applicant and the person assigned to do the rating.

3. Submitting your application for certification

Once you have fulfilled all the requirements, including achieving the required ratings for your session recording(s), complete the *Application Form for Certification as a Schema Therapist for Couples (ST-C)*, available from <http://www.schematherapysociety.org/page-18350>. It is recommended that you seek guidance about preparing to submit your application from your regional representative. Send an email to the Chairperson of the ST-C Committee, currently Dr Chiara Simeone-DiFrancesco (chiaradifrancescophd@gmail.com), who will inform you whom you can consult for this. When everything is ready, submit the completed application form with all supporting documentation to Chairperson of the ST-C Committee, as above.