



Catalyse

Further information about PRs, their history and what to expect

CAT's brief structured approach to psychotherapy with an emphasis on active, collaborative and early written and diagrammatic reformulation (mapping) lends itself to a shortened, mapping-focussed reformulation experience. This developed into the distinctive personal reformulation approach, increasingly used in a range of training contexts and with different professions.

Three applications influenced the [development of PRs](#):

- The use of an extended single session grew from the need to provide an experience of CAT therapy for visiting Australian CAT trainees. It was subsequently used by visiting therapists to provide a personal reformulation in countries beginning to offer training in CAT.
- The value of using CAT reformulation within very brief therapy was echoed by experience in using CAT in student counselling settings where clients might attend for crisis help but have good underlying mental health. In these circumstances the client can make rapid psychological use of a collaborative reformulation to step out of their difficulties and recover a healthy empathic stance towards themselves and their situation.
- The format of an extended half day session was also included as an element of personal development within the initial CAT skills training courses for Community Mental Health Teams developed by Ian Kerr.

As mentioned, an important assumption is that the client using the Personal Reformulation is well motivated and is intending to make use of the understandings and resulting map to help themselves further with their clinical or professional practice.

The focus is a collaborative negotiation but develops from the basis of exploring your work role with clients, colleagues and peers. A central aim is to develop a CAT understanding and a map of the likely patterns of interaction triggered for you when undertaking professional work. This can naturally overlap with more personal ground. If this does occur the therapist will be thoughtful with you about the time limits of the sessions and what can be safely explored. You and the therapist may decide this is something that you might want to return to in the future, whether in follow up sessions or in contemplating undertaking therapy. The emphasis on your work role helps to provide focus and containment and although not formally therapy, it gives the opportunity of experiencing a therapeutic approach and being in the 'other chair'.

[How are PRs structured?](#)

Personal Reformulations (PR's) are offered in slightly different formats but will typically be one of two forms:

- 1) An extended single session of 3 hours with a break.
- 2) A two hour session with a one hour follow-up session at an agreed interval, usually a month later.



The PR (three hours) is the minimum requirement for the personal development component of ACAT accredited CAT Skills or Foundation training and necessary for accreditation. It is either 2 hrs plus 1 hour or the extended single session of up to three hours typically with an introductory hour or so of exploration and discussion based ideally on completion of the psychotherapy file, followed by a break where therapist and client have a reflective task, coming back together when the therapist brings a brief reformulation (prose or map).

Participants are of course welcome to arrange additional follow-up meetings beyond that funded by the course fee.

A page on the ACAT website explains more about personal development or therapy at different levels of training in cognitive analytic therapy. [Click here to go to ACAT's information on personal development and therapy.](#)

[What happens in the initial session?](#)

The beginning of the first session will look at the boundaries of confidentiality and some reflections on your thoughts and feelings about the sessions. The therapist will have a collaborative approach when exploring any goals you might have for the sessions and how you might work together towards these.

The CAT approach of mapping will be used to track the conversation to establish reciprocal/relational roles, the feelings that occur and how these are managed. The map (and we all have one) helps with recognition and supports change through establishing exits. The map will be yours to take away and there is an expectation if you plan a follow up session that you will return with the map as a working tool to review and develop.

At the end of the sessions the therapist will reflect with you on the experience and what might be helpful to take away and work on, specifically listing these if helpful.

[What goes on in the follow up session?](#)

A follow up session provides a valuable space to review the initial session and is a useful way of consolidating the initial experience. It provides an opportunity to consider how the map might have been used to aid recognition and support exits. Any goals that were established at the end of the initial session can be reviewed and additional exits added. It is also an opportunity to gain additional understanding.

[What happens at the end?](#)

The therapist will reflect with you on the whole process and how you might continue to use the map and new understandings. It might be an opportunity to consider whether having any further sessions would be helpful.



[Feedback and evaluation](#)

We also invite you to provide feedback through a short online questionnaire. The information you provide is anonymous but you can provide your contact details if you wish to discuss anything about the PR experience. Catalyse welcomes all feedback. We regularly review this to see if any changes can be made to improve the sessions or information that you receive about the PRs. Sometimes a personal reformulation is emotionally distressing, but it should also feel constructive and the therapeutic relationship should feel safe. If you have any concerns or worries about the personal reformulation process, please raise them with your therapist and they will do their best to respond and resolve the issue.

[More information about personal reformulation](#)

Our Associate [Clive Turpin](#) who provides PRs wrote two blogs. The first answered some **frequently asked questions – read Clive’s blog – ‘A Little CAT Can Go a Long Way’ – by clicking here.**

His second blog considered **how people might prepare for a personal reformulation – read Clive’s second PR blog by clicking here**