Certified Training Center   
Suggestions & Best Practices

The individual ideas below reflect a curated list of suggestions from CTC directors and are not intended to be mandatory prescriptions, but merely guides for best practices relating to training, applicant engagement, etc. This list will be updated on a semi-regular basis.

* **Exam Preparation**

*Suggestions under this category relate to helping engage trainees with content that will best prepare them to do well on the exams. While there is a spectrum of philosophies between CTCs on this subject, the consensus view is that exam prep courses or resources should not lower expectations for trainees that the exams are rigorous by design. The exams are intended to 1) gauge the knowledge of the trainee and their ability to synthesize biblical doctrine with counseling practice and 2) evaluate the personal beliefs and articulations of beliefs from the trainee to verify they are congruent with ACBC standards.*

* + Incorporate exam questions throughout Fundamentals Training Course curriculum to help trainees make clearer associations between theology and practice.
  + Include a theology class in addition to or as a precursor to the Fundamentals Training Course that would specifically address key doctrines expressed in the exams, among others.
  + Seek to not answer questions for trainees. Help can be provided, but answers should reflect the personal beliefs and the level of maturity and understanding of the trainee as much as possible.
  + Provide check-ins with trainees who are in Phase 2. These could include occasional cohort meetings or e-mails that would seek to encourage and resource them further if they find themselves stuck in the writing process.
  + Offer either an in-person or online course that focuses on exam preparation. In such classes, require trainees to bring completed drafts to meetings and workshop those answers through instructor questioning and brief instruction pointing to further areas of study.
  + Guide trainees through two of three questions more heavily, but then require trainees to bring in drafts or outlines of answers for future questions as instructors transition from more hands-on to facilitators that provide coaching. Eventually, these trainees would be encouraged to workshop answers in cohorts.
  + Focus exclusively on resource development and do not offer much, if any, direct instruction on answering questions. Instead, focus on developing discussion in groups.
  + Consider going through exams at a slower pace (e.g., over two years) in a format like Sunday School.
* **Counseling Observation**

*Suggestions under this category relate to improving and personalizing the counseling observation component of Phase 1. The consensus view is that the lowest level of engagement, frequently correlating to the lowest quality outcome, is trainees watching pre-recorded counseling videos with little to no critical thinking or engagement required.*

* + Host live counseling observation opportunities for those willing to sit in on sessions at the CTC. One way to involve trainees in this process in a more interactive way would be to include them as not only observers, but to invite them as advocates who participate in the counseling case peripherally and practically outside of sessions.
  + Provide debriefing sessions post-meeting in order to help walk the trainee through key moments of the session. One way this could be accomplish would be to have counseling sessions set up in triads which would include the counselor, the counselee, and the observer (who would be responsible for taking notes).
* **Instruction Mode and Methodology (General Application)**

*Suggestions under this category include best practices for various ways to engage trainees during instruction, regardless of mode and training type.*

* + Include various reading assignments between in-person/online meetings that help fill information gaps and take into account ways to test trainees for comprehension on the reading and instruction.
  + Invest in a classroom management platform for virtual training which carry various tools that help track progress, provides tools for testing, and can host videos and documents. For online training, it is always preferable to avoid static forms of information consumption that don’t gauge trainee comprehension. Typically, there is a correlation between static forms of information (e.g., YouTube videos, etc.) that do not include trainee testing, accountability, or engagement, with low-quality outcome. Online training management platforms (which can be used in all-virtual or hybrid formats) include the following:
    - Canvas (there is a free version for churches)
    - Ministry Grid
    - Moodle
  + Offer training in longer stretches (several months to up to two years) with several assignments that are consider “personal growth assignments” focusing on the personal sanctification of the trainee.
  + Provide opportunities for interaction between trainers and trainees. This could take the form of Q&As spread throughout instruction or discussion boards prompted by instructors.
  + Introduce a “next steps” class that takes place after Fundamentals is completed that will help bridge the gap between Phase 1 and Phase 2. This course would accomplish the following: 1) review important aspects of BC method and theory approached in the exams, 2) answer questions about the ACBC certification process that will help encourage trainees to move forward, and 3) host role plays to help trainees think more practically about moving from theory into a counseling scenario.
* **Anticipating and Answering Inquiries about ACBC**

*Suggestions under this category include best practices for helping to proactively orient and introduce trainees to the ACBC certification process, membership matters, and certification dashboard, along with other relevant tools. Some of these suggestions are context specific and may not fit every training center.*

* + Require an application before the training begins. This application can be a helpful tool to see if anyone's theology seems different than ACBC's and prompt conversation.
  + Expose trainees to the doctrinal statements and code of conducts on the ACBC website before the first class.
  + Stress the fact that a prospective member’s theology *and* their church’s theology needs to line up with ACBC's in order to be certified.
  + Encourage trainees to register on the ACBC website and watch the videos as well as review all 3 phases and estimated costs with them.
  + Offer advanced courses where certification then can be actively promoted.
  + Consider having trainees provide a letter from their pastor before training begins in order to promote church involvement.
  + Offer a “taste and see” event that covers very basic/introductory elements of BC or discipleship then use interest to lead them to Fundamentals Training.
  + Bring up aspects of the three phases not just once, but on several occasions through the course of the training. This refreshes the memories of the trainees and may prompt questions.
  + Provide a resource desk during breaks that is staffed by ACBC certified counselors. These counselors can answer questions about the process. You will want to be sure that these individuals are providing the correct information and are well trained.
  + Send an email to registered attendees with links to the ACBC website where they can learn more about the process and urge them to make an account.