

BRITISH FOCUSING ASSOCIATION

Community Interest Company

ABOUT BFA

The British Focusing Association (BFA) is an association of people in Britain who have been trained to share or teach Focusing or to use Focusing in a professional context. It is a forum for Focusing practitioners and teachers which promotes peer support amongst its members. We want to bring together as many of the people who use Focusing professionally in this country as possible. We aim to support diversity, networking and good practice in the teaching and application of Focusing by our members. We want the BFA to be a forum for exploring and developing many ways of teaching and using Focusing.

COMMUNICATION

BFA members stay in touch with the group as a whole by means of the annual national gathering and AGM (see below), regional groups where members can meet face to face and a goggle email list which is open only to members. Collaboration, decision making and the circulation of essential information to members happen through the email list. Members can opt out of being on the list but may then not be party to some discussions and decisions.

MEETINGS

We have an annual gathering of BFA members for networking, Focusing together, connecting socially and carrying forward BFA business and activities. This is usually held over a long weekend. During the gathering we have a brief business meeting (AGM) in which we make all our decisions by consensus. Often the consensus is to entrust a small working group to make decisions on behalf of BFA as a whole.

All members agree to meet throughout the year for Peer Consultative Support and mutual learning.

AIMS

The primary objective of BFA is to further the development of Focusing in Britain and elsewhere. We do this by supporting:

- the teaching of Focusing
- the training of Focusing Practitioners and Focusing Teachers
- the appointment of Focusing Primary Mentors
- the further development of Focusing professionals
- applications of Focusing (in counselling, therapy, business, the arts and elsewhere)

- the development of Focusing groups
- the provision of information about Focusing, training in Focusing and applications of Focusing
- the expansion of Focusing's presence in the world through events, the BFA website, facebook group, newsletter, etc

HISTORY AND ACTIVITIES

The Association was originally formed in 1994 by a group of people who felt there was a need for support for Focusing teachers and teaching in Britain. Up to 2013, we were called the British Focusing Teacher's Association (BFTA).

Meetings in the early years established, among other things, the Association's aims, objectives and articles of association. We came to realise that the most important aspect of our meetings was fostering contact and developing a network of support between our members.

Over the years, the association has continued to grow through newly qualified BFA Practitioners & Teachers joining us, together with Focusing professionals trained elsewhere.

As we have grown, we have been able to support the development of a website and a four-monthly newsletter. In 2011 and 2014 we held UK Focusing Schools with over 100 people attending and in 2016 an international Focusing conference with 270 delegates.

In 2013 BFTA was registered as a Community Interest Company with a new name: The British Focusing Association CIC. We formed the company to make it possible for us to host major events and conferences like the UK Focusing Schools and the International Focusing Conference. BFA has also run a Focusing Community Camp for the last three summers.

We became a Community Interest company limited by guarantee. Being a Community Interest company means that we must reinvest any profits to further the development of Focusing. 'Limited by guarantee' limits the liability of each member to no more than £1 if the company has to go into liquidation.

When you become a member of BFA you also automatically become a member of the company.

In order to meet the requirements of Companies House we appoint directors who are legally responsible for a number of administrative tasks. In keeping with how we have always operated, we have agreed that decisions will continue to be made through a consensus process involving all our members. Becoming a limited company does not fundamentally change the way we operate.

HOW DOES BFA OPERATE?

In BFA we have always tried to make sure that the workings of our organisation are in harmony with the processes of Focusing itself. We are egalitarian, with all members having equal say in how the association is run and having equal access to information and

consulting with our inner sense of an issue to help us find our way forward. We aim to come to consensual agreement through listening to our own felt senses and the felt senses of others.

Within BFA there are many years of experience with Focusing and teaching Focusing – a living body of experience. We have come to realise that this can never be reduced to rules and regulations or detailed criteria and standards. Instead, we have guidelines and principles which members interpret from their felt sense. Each person has both the freedom to develop their work in ways that feel right with their inner sense, and responsibility for the content and process of their teaching.

Instead of having a chairperson, the role is shared by two people who are affectionately referred to as 'The Sofa'. The Sofa is responsible for keeping the work of the Association moving forward. Small groups of people are formed as needed to take responsibility for specific tasks or projects. Any member of the Association can be a member of any of these working groups.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Membership is open to Focusers with the BFA Practitioner or Teacher Certificate, or to those with roughly equivalent accreditation – which includes people accredited by The Focusing Institute as Certified Focusing Professionals or Trainers, recognised as Trainers by the Institute for Bio-spiritual Research, or holding an MA or Post-Graduate Diploma or Certificate in Focusing & Experiential Psychotherapy from the University of East Anglia (UEA).

FINANCES & MEMBERSHIP FEES

There is a BFA bank account and a treasurer. We want membership fees to be modest, but sufficient to enable the Association to function and grow. The subscription is currently £40 per year.

CODE OF ETHICS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, HEALTH & SAFETY AND MEDIATION

We have a simple code which consists of general statements of ethical principle, leaving it to the individual to make 'felt sense interpretations' in their actual situation. The code does not lay down rules of practice.

We also have Focusing-oriented policies on equal opportunities and health and safety.

Our mediation procedure for managing complaints or disputes between a Focusing Practitioner or Teacher and a Focusing client or student are not prescriptive, and seek to encourage a Focusing and listening approach to resolving issues as they arise.

THE BFA CERTIFICATES & RECOGNITION

BFA is currently issuing three qualifications:

- Focusing Skills Certificate: an attendance certificate given by BFA Recognised Teachers to students who attend 60 hours initial training in Focusing, listening & guiding.
- Focusing Practitioner Certificate: a professional qualification for people to give one to one Focusing sessions. Practitioners can go on to train to teach Focusing to groups if they wish.
- Focusing Teacher Certificate: BFA's qualification for teaching the Focusing Skills Course to groups.

Practitioner and Teacher certificates are awarded by the BFA Mentors who have many years of experience of teaching Focusing, and who are free to design their own programmes and develop their own teaching and mentoring styles. The process of gauging students' readiness to 'graduate' includes Focusing time and self-assessment. Practitioners and Teachers are invited to join BFA and describe themselves as 'BFA Recognised'.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FOCUSING INSTITUTE

Whilst BFA is an autonomous organisation, we keep close links with the International Focusing Institute (TIFI). Several of our members are Focusing Institute Co-ordinators and able to offer the TIFI Trainer Certification. BFA Mentors responsible for the BFA Practitioner and Teacher programmes are also Co-ordinators with the Institute, and therefore able to offer both the BFA and TIFI certifications.

Our intention is to keep the BFA Practitioner and the TIFI Trainer qualifications as broadly equivalent levels.

All BFA members are encouraged to join the Institute.

THE FUTURE

We have built a strong, supportive group of people committed to the development of Focusing in Britain. We benefit from having a network, which is both friendly and professional, where we can learn from and with each other. We are using BFA as a practical learning project, discovering how to run an organisation that respects feelings, bodies and felt senses. The Association is a lively space, always developing in new ways. As we move into the future, we plan to offer more events and develop more ways to support our whole Focusing community.