

Proposed Panel on Certification – detailed version

DRAFT July 20, 2015

INTRODUCTION

A process for appointing new Coordinators is necessary because, with the retirement of Gene Gendlin and the death of Mary Hendricks, wisdom now resides in the community as a whole. We want to ensure that those who are appointed as Coordinators are qualified to take on this important teaching and leadership role so that the whole Focusing community can have confidence in the abilities and skills of the new Coordinator. We need to ensure fairness and transparency in this process. Please note that the process we are proposing will apply only to new Coordinators.

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A Panel on Certification is a proposal for the process for appointing new Coordinators. We seek advice and input from all interested parties. This document is a draft, subject to changes small or large, depending on the feedback we receive.

PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES OF PANEL

Specific Purpose: □ To approve the appointment of Coordinators. □ □

General Purpose: □ To protect diversity (among individuals as well as regional or cultural groups) while also ensuring that those certified as Coordinators by The Focusing Institute are able to carry forward Focusing and Experiential Listening. □ □

Working principles: □

Respect traditions that already exist. □

Uphold excellence in practice without standardizing.

Acknowledgement of language and culture as issues: We recognize that the Institute operates in the United States as its headquarters and with English as its primary language. We are aware that it will take effort, sometimes quite uncomfortable, for us to proceed in a way that is truly international and respectful of a wide variety of languages and cultures. We expect that we will do so imperfectly, but we pledge to do so with sincere effort and to be responsive when we are being told that we have not yet achieved this goal. One important way is to have regional bodies be involved in deciding who will be on the Panel. An additional safeguard would be to have designated liaisons between the Panel and each language or cultural group (especially if those groups are not represented on the Panel).

Note: This document uses the abbreviation CNT, which is often used as an abbreviation for Coordinator in Training, to refer to those who are being considered for appointment as a Coordinator.

THE PANEL WOULD BE CHARGED WITH DOING THE FOLLOWING

1) DEFINE QUALITIES OF A COORDINATOR

The Panel will consider what qualities are required for being a Coordinator. The following is an example of what the Panel might come up with; this list is only for illustration:

- skill as a Focuser
- familiarity with key concepts in the Philosophy of the Implicit (few will be experts in philosophy, but the Panel might decide, for instance, that all Coordinators should be able to explain how Focusing is based in a much larger philosophical context)
- skill as a teacher
- familiarity with styles of Focusing other than their own
- friendly, positive participation with the community, even during times of stress and disagreement; adds their voice and listens to others.
- leadership qualities

2) DETERMINE MEANS OF ASSESSMENT

The Panel will create a process for determining if an individual displays such qualities. The following list is an example of what the Panel might decide is required:

- Letters of recommendation
- A Skype interview between the Panel and the CNT
- A resume or curriculum vitae
- An essay
- In the case of systems that already work, the recommendation of someone representing that group (for example, the recommendation of the Japanese liaison) might be accepted instead of the other list of requirements.

SOME IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES IN DETERMINING MEANS OF ASSESSMENT:

- As its starting point, the Panel should use the already-existing guidelines, as found at www.focusing.org/ccr called "Guidelines for Coordinators-in-Training to Become Certifying Coordinators." However, in order to honor diversity, the Panel will have to have multiple guidelines about what a CNT will need to do in order to be approved. (Using Japan as an example again: in order to honor the manner in which Japan approves Coordinators, the Panel would not approve a CNT from Japan if that person had not gone through the Japanese process, even if that person otherwise meets the guidelines.) The Panel will have to get clear information from the existing Coordinator who recommends the CNT about whether that CNT comes under

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the specific guidelines of a region or culture.

- An important principle will be that any CNT should have the endorsement of at least two different existing Coordinators in order to become a new Coordinator. The Panel will want to ensure that no CNT is appointed as a Coordinator unless at least two existing Coordinators have enough confidence in the CNT to be able to enthusiastically endorse him or her.
- If the Panel does not approve a CNT to become a Coordinator, it would give a clear explanation to the person in writing. CNTs would be given opportunities to try again. The Panel would define how a person proceeds if they do not succeed the first time.
- The Focusing Institute will not appoint any Coordinators who have not been approved by the panel.

3) UNDERSTAND AND PROTECT WHAT IS ALREADY WORKING

The Panel will learn as much as it can about what systems are already in place for the appointment of Coordinators. These systems might be national (as with the Japanese) or individual (individual Coordinators might have very clear, consistent and excellent systems for when they elevate a person to Coordinator).

4) CONNECT WITH BODIES OR INDIVIDUALS AS APPROPRIATE

The Panel should find appropriate ways to interact with already-existing systems. The Panel might determine that the system in a certain region or with an individual Coordinator is already working well. In that case, it could create a way of interacting with that already-existing group or person to accept their recommendations for who will be a Coordinator under that particular system.

Examples:

- If the Panel has determined that the Japanese system is working well as a means of satisfying the expectations for who will be a TFI Coordinator in Japan, then the Panel might ask the Japanese Professionals Forum to designate a liaison to the Panel. When that liaison gives the Panel the name of a Japanese Coordinator, and assures the Panel that that person has met all the requirements, then that would constitute sufficient evidence to the Panel that the individual should be appointed as a Coordinator.

- If the Panel has determined that Existing Coordinator X already has a highly transparent and well-established systems for elevating others to Coordinator status, the Panel would honor that system, while finding a way to ensure that it is not just one individual existing Coordinator approving the readiness of a new Coordinator.

5) ENSURE THAT REQUIREMENTS FOR HOW TO BECOME A COORDINATOR ARE CLEAR TO ALL

The Panel should actively distribute information in all relevant languages and using effective means, so that its requirements and guidelines are widely known and understood.

6) DETERMINE WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR MAINTAINING ONE'S STATUS AS A COORDINATOR

7) CREATE A PROCESS FOR RECEIVING FEEDBACK

The community needs to be able to make comments and express concerns.

8) WORK IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THE FOCUSING ETHOS

- Respecting diversity
- Honoring the Felt Sense
- Seeking cooperation and consensus
- Committing to listening
- Protecting the international character of The Focusing Institute by actively including voices from across the world and being aware that Western European (especially English-speaking) cultural bias must be actively counter-balanced

9) REPORT TO THE BOARD AND/OR THE INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF THE FOCUSING INSTITUTE REGULARLY, AS DETERMINED WHEN THE PANEL IS CONSTITUTED

THE PANEL IS A BODY OF THE FOCUSING INSTITUTE

This Panel on Certification is a body of The Focusing Institute, and must act in support of the Institute. Its role is to ensure that certification by The Focusing Institute is meaningful and can be shown to have value. It is accountable to the wider community as well, but it cannot make decisions that will do clear harm to the sustainability of the Institute (for instance, it could not decide to eliminate fees for certification, as that would make TFI insolvent). For this reason, the Board of Trustees of the Institute has the right to intervene (in a Focusing way -- cooperatively and seeking common ground) when there is reasonable cause to believe that actions that the Panel takes could be damaging to TFI. The Board and the Panel should find ways to be in communication regularly to maintain a cooperative, positive relationship.

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MEMBERS OF THE PANEL

One possible configuration:

The Executive Director of The Focusing Institute

One member of the International Leadership Council

One member of the Board of Trustees

Four Coordinators who have been chosen by Coordinators in their region/cultural or language group for a set term (perhaps 3 years). (Note that only those current on their TFI dues would be eligible to be on the panel or to be involved in choosing those on the panel.)

Another possible configuration:

The ILC is asking itself how this Panel might relate to the ILC. Should the ILC become the Panel? Should the Panel be a sub-group of the ILC -- perhaps a "Certifying Leadership Council"? The ILC sees the idea of this Panel as a possible model for how to connect and bring people in.

THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW CNTs WOULD ENTER INTO THE PROCESS:

- We anticipate that the earliest part of the process will remain unchanged. In other words, depending on local culture, either a Focuser approaches an existing Coordinator to express an interest in becoming a Coordinator, or an existing Coordinator approaches a Focuser to encourage that person to become a Coordinator.
- The Panel will want to give guidance about when first contact with the Panel should happen. For instance, should a person's name be submitted to the Panel before that person can be designated a CNT? Should the person's name first be submitted to the panel soon after the person is designated a CNT? Or should the person's name only be submitted to the Panel at the very end of the process? (Note that it is risky to wait until the end because if there are problems, it will be more difficult to address them.)
- Can only an existing Coordinator recommend a CNT to the Panel, or should an individual be able to self-nominate?
- We anticipate that the Panel's first few months (or even the first full year) might be spent felt sensing into what processes are most right.
- The Panel would meet online regularly (perhaps every month for the first year and every 3 months after that) to do its work and review CNTs.

THE FUTURE OF THE PANEL

There are many issues around certification which would benefit from sustained attention. Without creating rigidity, it would be useful to have this Panel (or perhaps sub-panels) eventually begin to look at other questions around certification, such as:

- Defining various levels of certification and elaborating Core Proficiencies and best practices in each in consultation and

collaboration with Coordinators.

- Working with other bodies to encourage best practice and ensure excellence in the varieties of Focusing as they develop. One example would be working with the International Association of FOT's to address questions and concerns which arise with FOT certification.
- Fostering the development of regional or cultural/language groups to form associations to develop guidelines appropriate to their particular situation, and to foster communication between the Institute and themselves.
- Connecting those seeking certification with Coordinators.
- Acting to arbitrate disputes between Coordinators.
- Acting to arbitrate disputes between Coordinators and their trainees.
- Hearing complaints, concerns, suggestions about TFI's certification process and responding appropriately.