

# Insight Improvisation Certification Guidelines

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## Introduction

**Insight Improvisation** is a drama therapy approach combining meditation, improvisation, and psychotherapy. It is used by therapists mainly with individuals, and can also be applied with couples, families, and groups; some individuals use it outside of a standard therapy context as a form of self-therapy or peer counseling. Insight Improv helps one explore life themes and challenges through spontaneous dramas—emerging from inner listening, authentic movement, inner imagery, roles, and stories—which can lead to insight and emotional self-expression, inviting self-reflection, personal healing, self-discovery and growth.

**Advanced training and certification** in Insight Improvisation is offered for therapists and others who wish to gain a broader and deeper understanding of its underlying principles and more extensive practice in using the range of active techniques that comprise the approach.

There are three levels of certification in Insight Improvisation:

- I. **Insight Improvisation Practitioner (IIP)** for those using Insight Improvisation as an individual or peer practice.
- II. **Certified Insight Improvisation Practitioner (CIIP)** for therapists using Insight Improvisation as a drama therapy approach with clients.
- III. **Certified Trainer (CIIP/CT)** for drama therapists and others teaching group programs in Insight Improvisation.

Joel Gluck, MEd, RDT/BCT, CIIP/CT, the originator of Insight Improvisation, offers training and certification in the US and internationally.

## Certification Requirements

Please Note:

- Certification at each level is at the discretion of the trainer, who must be a CIIP/CT (the word "trainer" below refers to a CIIP/CT). When needed, the trainer may ask the trainee to repeat, revise, and/or expand on their work fulfilling a particular requirement if the trainer feels the requirement has not been fulfilled to a standard sufficient to ensure the trainee's understanding and experience with the relevant concepts or practices.

- While we will do our best to accommodate trainees whose primary language is not English, currently all students must produce written materials in English or have a translation into English made of their writing.
- Peer, therapy, individual supervision, Certification/Supervision/TTT Group sessions, as well as other sessions, may take place in person or remotely via video call.

### **Special Notice: Temporary Modification of Requirements during COVID-19 Pandemic**

During the pandemic, in order to allow individuals seeking certification to proceed with the process, we have modified and/or relaxed certain guidelines temporarily, with the understanding that trainees will complete the standard requirements once programs have resumed being offered in person. Specifically:

1. **Postponing the Life Drama prerequisite.** For those who wish to begin the IIP-level certification process but are unable to attend the Life Drama four-day program in person, during the pandemic we are permitting them to begin the IIP certification process, if they have attended a minimum of three (3) online Insight Improv programs. **However, in order to complete IIP certification,** trainees must fulfill the requirement of attending all four days of Life Drama in person.
2. **Attending advanced courses online.** For those who have attended Life Drama but still need to attend one or more of the advanced courses (A1-A4) to complete IIP or CIIP certification, we will make versions of those programs available online (OL-A1-4) and count the online versions toward certification. **However, we urge all who become certified through attending online programs to complete A1-A4 in person** once those programs become available again, as the experiential nature of those programs and the resultant learning depends so much on in-person interaction (many exercises are not possible to adapt to online form, such as those involving physical contact).
3. **Meditation and authentic movement retreat requirements.** During the pandemic, trainees are permitted to attend an online meditation course and/or online authentic movement program as a substitute for an in-person meditation retreat or authentic movement workshop. Note:
  - a. **Please inform your trainer of the program you're thinking of attending** before registering, to get their input as to whether that program would fulfill the relevant requirement.
  - b. **We urge all those who take online programs as substitutes** to follow up post-pandemic by attending an in-person meditation retreat and an in-person authentic movement workshop.
4. **In order to begin the CIIP certification process,** trainees must complete IIP certification, including completing all four days of Life Drama in-person.

## I. Insight Improvisation Practitioner (IIP)

1. **Certification Group Program (CGP).** Has completed the CGP:
  1. Led by a qualified trainer, for the purpose of in-depth teaching, training, sharing experiences as a cohort, and facilitating the certification process.
  2. Opportunity to learn about Insight Improvisation and related disciplines in greater depth (e.g. psychodrama, authentic movement, meditation, etc.), including terminology, concepts, techniques, history/background/context, etc.
  3. The group meets for eight (8) sessions, two (2) hours per session.
  4. Prerequisite: Participants in the CGP must complete the four-day Life Drama program prior to joining (or the equivalent, by permission of the instructor).
2. **Additional programs.** Has completed the first five programs in the Insight Improv curriculum: [Life Drama \(B1 and B2\)](#) plus the first three [advanced training programs \(A1, A2, and A3\)](#).
3. **Peer practice.** Has completed eight (8) sessions of Insight Improvisation with peers, as follows:
  1. Has documented an independent peer practice using Insight Improvisation/psolodrama with colleagues, friends, or fellow students, participating in both psoloist and witness roles in each session; and meeting with at least three (3) different people. Each session is 90 minutes minimum.
  2. Has demonstrated an understanding of psoloist and witness roles through writing about their peer sessions, including transcripts of several of their own improvisations, along with commentary. *(Each case example and commentary should be about 1500 words; along with a discussion of witnessing, the full paper should be approximately 5000-6000 words.)*
4. **Individual session.** Has completed a peer session with a trainer (typically 1.5 to 2 hours) practicing psolodrama as both psoloist and witness; trainer provides feedback and coaching on the trainee's witnessing and sharing as well as on their psolodrama.
5. **In-depth study.** In addition to the required Insight Improv programs, has studied and practiced meditation, authentic movement, and self-revelatory theater in depth.
  1. **Meditation retreat.** Has completed a personal or group silent meditation retreat, for a minimum of seven (7) days, including sitting and walking meditation, *samadhi*, *vipassana*, and *metta* practices, supervised by a qualified teacher.
  2. **Authentic movement.** Has completed an authentic movement workshop or retreat, for a minimum of two (2) days, including pair and group authentic movement, and in-depth practice moving, witnessing, and sharing, supervised by a qualified teacher or experienced practitioner.
  3. **Self-revelatory theater.** Has created, rehearsed, and performed their own one-person show for an audience, live and in-person (or live and online), submitting a video recording of the performance as documentation (and, optionally, the script). The show is an autobiographical, therapeutic theater piece—scripted and/or improvised—exploring select themes, stories, fantasies, desires, hopes, dreams, fears, traumas, hidden parts, roles, conflicts, and/or other shadow material from

the trainee's life. Trainee should seek guidance and feedback from their trainer as they begin to work on their performance piece.

*Note: Meditation, authentic movement, and performance experience equivalent to the above may be accepted at the discretion of the trainer.*

6. **Reading.** Has read the following:
  1. The following chapters in the [Insight Improv Book](#):
    1. Parts I & II: chapters on Meditation, Authentic Movement, Shared Vipassana, Role Stream and Scene Stream
    2. Part III: chapters on Warming Up to Psolodrama, The Entryway to Psolodrama, The Practice of Psolodrama, Troubleshooting Psolodrama, Witnessing Psolodrama, The Psolodrama Sharing Process, Coaching Psolodrama, and Psolodrama Alone
  2. Plus, one or more of the following recommended books:
    1. *Peace is Every Step* by Thich Nhat Hanh
    2. *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening* by Joseph Goldstein
    3. *Authentic Movement: Essays* by Mary Starks Whitehouse, Janet Adler and Joan Chodorow edited by Patrizia Pallaro
    4. *Acting In (3rd edition)* by Adam Blatner
7. **Documentation.** Has provided written documentation of all of the above requirements for approval by their trainer, including certification group, program, individual session, peer session, and retreat dates, locations, and names of teachers/therapists/etc.—as well as a list of readings completed.
8. **Writing project.** Has submitted original writing about Insight Improvisation, in the form of an article or essay, optionally including illustrations, photos, links to video, etc. The purpose of the writing project is to demonstrate the trainee's original thinking about Insight Improvisation and proficiency with the ideas and techniques behind it. Trainee should seek feedback and input on their chosen topic from their trainer prior to beginning work on the project. (*Length: approximately 2000-3000 words.*)  
Themes can include but are not limited to the following:
  - Personal experiences addressing a specific life theme or challenge using Insight Improvisation. Examples: *"Exploring my relationship with my mother through psolodrama"; "Learning to let go of control"; "Facing my phobia"*
  - An exploration of a particular aspect of Insight Improvisation, a broader psychological or societal theme, or an inquiry into a particular question. Examples: *"Gender fluidity in protagonist and auxiliary ego roles"; "Performance Mind and projecting onto the witness"; "How is Shared Vipassana similar to and different from vipassana meditation?"; "The power of giving voice to inanimate objects"*
9. **Embodiment.** Exemplifies the qualities of an Insight Improvisation practitioner, bringing mindfulness, openness, and kindness into their interactions with others.

## II. Certified Insight Improvisation Practitioner (CIIP)

Has fulfilled all of the requirements for the IIP, above, plus:

1. **Certified therapist.** Is an RDT (Registered Drama Therapist), CP (Certified Practitioner of Psychodrama), or certified in a form of creative arts therapy, play therapy, or a related form of therapy, and/or is a licensed mental health professional. Candidate must provide documentation of their certification/license for approval by a trainer.
2. **Supervision Group Program (SGP).** Has completed the SGP:
  1. Led by a qualified trainer, for the purpose of in-depth teaching, training, sharing experiences as a cohort, and facilitating the certification process.
  2. Opportunity to learn about the use of Insight Improvisation in individual therapy and related disciplines in greater depth (e.g. psychodrama, authentic movement, meditation, etc.), including terminology, concepts, techniques, history/background/context, etc.
  3. The group meets for eight (8) sessions, two and a half (2.5) hours per session.
  4. Prerequisite: Participants in the SGP must complete IIP-level certification prior to joining.
3. **Additional Programs.** Has completed [advanced training program A4: Working with Individuals](#).
4. **Individual sessions.** Has completed seven (7) individual sessions with a trainer, as follows:
  1. **Psychodrama.** One session with trainee in the role of client and trainer in the role of therapist, using psychodrama as the main technique.
  2. **Psolodrama.** Two sessions with trainee in the role of client and trainer in the role of therapist, using psolodrama as the main technique.
  3. **Assisting.** Two sessions with trainee in the role of assistant, translator, or observer. Trainer is in the role of therapist, working with a third party in the role of client (typically an individual therapy client or another trainee).
  4. **As Therapist.** Two sessions with trainee in the role of therapist—and trainer in the role of client—using psychodrama, psolodrama, and/or related techniques.  
*Trainee meets with trainer for a debrief following each session to discuss the trainee's experience of the session as well as the choices the person in the therapist role made. Typical session length is 60 minutes for the session and 30 minutes for the debrief.*
5. **Individual supervision and case examples.**
  1. **Individual supervision.** Has completed three (3) individual supervision sessions with a trainer, discussing trainee's use of Insight Improvisation in their therapy practice.
  2. **Case examples.** Has submitted documentation and commentary on two (2) psychotherapy sessions they conducted with two different clients in which they used Insight Improvisation techniques:
    1. Include at least one example of a client practicing psolodrama, with documentation of both the psolodrama itself and the sharing process afterward.

2. Documentation can be in the form of a written transcript or a video recording. Written transcripts should include descriptions of what the client did physically as well as what they said.
  3. Written commentary should (1) introduce the case by briefly describing the client, their background and current circumstances, as well why they sought therapy, and (2) discuss the choices made by the therapist during the session, and the impact of those choices on the client, on how the session progressed, and on the outcome. (See the chapter on Insight Improvisation in *Current Approaches in Drama Therapy, third edition*, for two case examples demonstrating format and approximate length.)
6. **Reading.** Has read the following:
1. Gluck, J. (2020), *Insight Improvisation: Integrating mindfulness and meditation with drama therapy*. In D.R. Johnson and R. Emunah (Eds.), *Current approaches in drama therapy, third edition*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
  2. The case example in Gluck, J. (2012), *Mindfulness and drama therapy: Insight Improvisation and the transformation of anger*. In L. Rappaport (Ed.), *Mindfulness and the arts therapies*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
  3. From the *Insight Improv Book*:
    1. Introduction
    2. Parts I, II, and III: all remaining chapters
    3. Part IV: chapter on Working with Individuals.
  4. *Acting In (3rd edition)* by Adam Blatner
  5. Plus, one or more of the following additional recommended reading:
    1. *A Clinician's Guide to Psychodrama* by Eva Leveton
    2. *Psychodrama, Surplus Reality, and the Art of Healing* by Zerka Moreno
    3. In *Current Approaches in Drama Therapy, third edition*, chapters on The Integrative Five Phase Model, Developmental Transformations, Autobiographical Therapeutic Performance, as well as Psychodrama and Sociodrama.
7. **Documentation.** Has provided written documentation of all of the above requirements (including SGP, additional program, and individual supervision dates, as well as readings completed) for approval by their trainer.
8. **Writing project.** Has submitted original writing on the use of Insight Improvisation in psychotherapy, in the form of an article or essay, optionally including illustrations, photos, links to video, etc. The purpose of the writing project is to demonstrate the trainee's original thinking about Insight Improvisation as a therapist as well as the depth of their understanding of how it can be used in therapy practice. The project can include an exploration of a particular aspect of Insight Improvisation, a particular theme or challenge common to multiple clients or to a specific population, or an inquiry into a specific question. Trainee should seek feedback and input on their chosen topic from their trainer prior to beginning work on the project. (*Length: approximately 3000-5000 words.*)
9. **Embodiment.** Exemplifies the qualities of an Insight Improvisation therapist:

1. Brings mindfulness, openness, and kindness into their interactions with others.
2. Agrees to maintain a consistently high level of safety and quality in the work they do, and to live according to the ethical guidelines of their profession. Anyone violating those standards may have their Insight Improvisation certification (CIIP) revoked at the discretion of senior trainers.

### III. Certified Trainer (CIIP/CT)

*Please note: Becoming a trainer of Insight Improvisation is by invitation only; in order to begin the education and certification process toward becoming a trainer, one must first receive a written invitation from Joel Gluck or the team of senior trainers.*

Has fulfilled all of the requirements for CIIP, above, plus:

1. **Certified drama therapist, psychodramatist, or equivalent.** Is an RDT (Registered Drama Therapist), CP (Certified Practitioner of Psychodrama), or the equivalent, and/or is able to demonstrate and document significant experience in teaching and applying drama therapy and psychodrama (in particular, directing psychodrama with large groups).
2. **Train-the-Trainer Group Program (TGP).** Completed the TGP:
  1. Led by a qualified trainer, for the purpose of in-depth teaching, training, sharing experiences as a cohort, and facilitating the certification process.
  2. Opportunity to learn about the teaching of Insight Improvisation and related disciplines in greater depth (e.g. psychodrama, authentic movement, meditation, etc.), including terminology, concepts, techniques, history/background/context, etc.
  3. The group meets for eight (8) sessions, three (3) hours per session.
  4. Prerequisite: Participants in the TTT Group must complete CIIP-level certification prior to joining.
3. **Additional Programs and Assisting/co-teaching.**
  1. Has completed the Life Drama program (B1 & B2) twice.
  2. Has assisted, translated, and/or co-taught in at least one Life Drama program (B1 & B2, all four days) as well as each program in the Advanced curriculum (A1-A4).
  3. Has completed all train-the-trainer programs (T level), and has been “passed” by the instructor of each of those programs.
4. **Teaching.** Has led a full-length (four day) Life Drama program (B1 and B2), as follows:
  1. Has organized the training themselves, with a minimum consistent attendance of eight participants throughout the four days.
  2. Has been observed by their trainer throughout their teaching of the program.
  3. Has gathered participant evaluations/written feedback and submitted it to their trainer.

4. Has received feedback from and been “passed” by the trainer (based on a list of standards for that program).
5. **Required reading.** Has read the following:
  1. The [Insight Improv Book](#) chapter entitled “Facilitating Workshops”.
  2. All remaining chapters in the [Insight Improv Book](#) not yet assigned.
  3. All additional recommended reading appearing above.
6. **Documentation.** Has provided documentation of the fulfillment of all of these requirements (including all program dates and signatures of instructors and observers, as well as reading completed) for approval by a trainer.
7. **Final writing project.** Has submitted a statement of purpose as a trainer of Insight Improvisation, including personal reflections on why they wish to be a trainer; the values, beliefs, and personal qualities they wish to exemplify in the role of trainer; their hopes, goals, concerns and fears; what they perceive to be their own strengths and challenges; and feedback they have received as a trainer that they would like to incorporate going forward.
8. **Certification review meeting.** Upon completion of all requirements, and following submission of their final writing project, trainer and trainee meet to review and discuss the trainee’s work and writing. This is an opportunity for the trainer to share thoughts and feedback prior to certifying the trainee as a trainer of Insight Improvisation.
9. **Embodiment.** Exemplifies the qualities of an Insight Improvisation trainer:
  1. Brings mindfulness, openness, and kindness into their interactions with others.
  2. Agrees to maintain a consistently high level of safety and quality in the programs they teach and in all their interactions with students and colleagues, and to live according to the ethical guidelines of their profession. Anyone violating those standards may have their Insight Improvisation trainer certification (CT) revoked at the discretion of senior trainers.
10. **Post-certification supervision, approval, and feedback.** All Insight Improv trainers agree to the following when planning to teach a program for the first time:
  1. Abide by the decision of senior trainers whether or not they are ready to teach that program. (In some cases, a senior trainer may suggest further reading, training, or other steps in order to be ready.)
  2. If they are deemed ready, arrange for observation of the program by a senior trainer or someone designated by the senior trainer as an official observer.
  3. Reserve time to receive feedback—either following each day of the program or shortly after the program—from the senior trainer or the observer. (A designated observer is also asked to submit a brief report to the senior trainer following the program, summarizing the main points of their feedback.)
  4. Abide by the decision of the senior trainer whether or not they are qualified to teach that program further, and—if not—what steps they must take in order to be qualified.



## Additional Notes and Guidelines Regarding Certification

- **Subject to change.** These certification requirements are subject to change; we will be evolving and refining them over time. Although we will do our best to inform trainees when this document is updated, trainees are expected to revisit this document to make sure they are conforming to the latest requirements before submitting materials or documentation. We will maintain a revision date at the top of this document for reference purposes.
- **Renewal.** To remain in good standing, certification must be renewed every four (4) years (measured from the date of certification). Our commitment is to make renewal as easy as possible, but in some cases it may require additional reading, writing, training, or individual work. Please check in with your trainer (or the team of certified trainers) no later than 6 months prior to your renewal date for information about how to renew.

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End of document. For more information, please visit [www.insightimprov.org](http://www.insightimprov.org).