

Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy – Level 1 (January 2014)

I was recently kindly funded by the Foundation for Professionals in Services for Adolescents to undertake the Level 1 training in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) which I have since completed.

My role is to work specifically alongside young people who are looked after by the local authority, as well as their foster carers, within a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. The main aim of my role is to prevent breakdown of the placement and to offer timely support, assessment and assistance.

Children and young people who are looked after are at significantly greater risk of developing mental health issues as they grow older this, in part, may be due to trauma experienced in their earlier lives as well as the attachment, either secure or insecure that may have developed between them and their care givers. Children who are looked after and who present with issues relating to trauma as well as attachment retreated issues may present with challenging behaviours at home, in school, act out both verbally and physically

DDP is a psychological intervention/approach for children and adolescents who have experienced developmental trauma, as the intervention is based on attachment theory as well as neuropsychological research; it incorporates principles of treatments that address trauma as well as relationship based psychotherapy. DDP offers a treatment approach for working with the child and their family or in my case their foster carers.

The four day training was facilitated by Julie Hudson and by the training organisation Family Futures. In total there were 31 attendees. The professionals making up the training was varied, this in turn led to a richer learning environment with a varied range of views, opinions and experiences being shared.

The training began with an overview of the theoretical foundations of DDP and an introduction to 'PACE' (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy); an 'attitude' of interacting that aims to develop relationships and seeks to resolve or pinpoint areas of trauma. This very basic principle will undoubtedly be useful for future interactions and sessions with young people who are looked after.

The second stage of the training included the core principles of DDP principles such as affective-reflective dialogue, interactive repair and construction of a narrative when working with children and young people. The remainder of the training focused on the practicalities of the approach and the challenges of working with/parenting this client group. The training was made up of presentations, group work, role play and the review of therapy sessions undertaken by the expert trainer.

The training will allow me to impart aspects of DDP to foster carers and to use with children and young people who are looked after. As my role develops further I hope to incorporate and assist in the education of other professionals with regards to the core principles of DDP.

Whilst on the course and prior to attending I was keen to share my extremely positive experience of the foundation and I wish to offer many thanks to FPSA for the opportunity to undertake this course.

Andrew Gammon, Specialist LAC CAMHS Practitioner.