

Somatic Experiencing: Beginning Year 1

Course dates – June 2022 and December 2022

I am an Occupational Therapist and work across several settings to support children and their families. I work with adopted and fostered children and their families through the Adoption Support Fund; I work in a school for children aged between 11 and 19 all of whom have EHCP's and have generally experienced several failed school placements before coming to learn in our school; I provide training to foster carers as part of a pilot study that is seeking to support foster carers to understand their children's behaviour from a sensory/relational and trauma informed perspective.

I bring a variety of approaches to my work in these settings, including core OT models of assessment and intervention, Sensory Integration, and Sensory Attachment Intervention. I became aware of Somatic Experiencing through supervision sessions that highlighted that this would be a model that was directly applicable to the young people and families that I work with.

Somatic Experiencing is a bodywork approach that seeks to understand and support individuals who have experienced trauma and help them to work through this using the core principles of body tracking, titration and pendulation. This approach is based on the work of Peter Levine.

The training consists of 2 blocks of 6 days. I have completed one of these blocks and will complete the second in December. The instructor is Lael Keen, and the course is set in Edinburgh.

During my first week, I learned the theory and core principles of Somatic Experiencing, as well as having the opportunity to observe this intervention in practice and participate in practical learning (triads), expertly supported by SE practitioners who act as assistants to support our learning. The experiential nature of this course is both challenging but highly effective and impactful.

An essential element of this training is that practitioners wishing to certify go through their own process understanding the impact of SE as it relates to them and having personal sessions for themselves, and supervision sessions that help them to think about their clients in relation to this approach. So far, I have had the opportunity to have two sessions with SE practitioners. These have been highly impactful. Although I am not able to use this technique until the completion of the second week, I am already starting to consider how I may use it with clients and starting to understand children's behaviours differently.

I am hugely grateful to the FPSA for funding my attendance on the first year of training for Somatic Experiencing. I would whole heartedly recommend this course and I am really looking forward to the second block of training and being able to apply this learning to my clients.

Occupational Therapist