

Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Practice and Parenting (DDP) – level 1

Online – DDP Network

Trainer: Alison Kieth

Dates: 16th – 19th January 2024

Special Guardianship Social Worker, and Independent Social Worker

The level one course allowed me to learn and develop my understanding of the core components of DDP – understanding the DDP framework; understanding the theoretical foundations; understanding how this approach works in practice as a therapeutic approach to support children, young people and adults who have experienced trauma.

A key thread running throughout the training was the notion that DDP is a way of being, not just something to be ‘done’ or applied in a piecemeal way with families and carers. The training also allowed for time to think around how using and applying DDP with the wider network helped to create a sense of safety and understanding; how this created safety through the relationship and the focus on the child/parent dyad. Throughout the training we learnt about the neuroscience of trauma and its impact on the brain and therefore the impact on relationships – the complexity of how relationships can cause the trauma but it is relationships that are needed to heal the trauma.

We were able to explore these through learning and teaching, smaller group discussions and then smaller practice groups. These smaller groups were mostly role play exercises that allowed us to better understand how DDP works and feels from the perspective of the practitioner, child/parent/carer and observer. These were invaluable to embed the learning and these role plays have since helped me in my interactions and sessions with families and young people I am supporting.

Alison and her co-trainer Ben created a safe space for the training and I felt a good connection towards the other attendee’s – despite this being online. The small practice groups were with the same people each day and this allowed us to create a real safe space and level of connection that was needed in order to explore our understanding of DDP and to try out the methods being discussed. Alison provided us with wider and additional reading material / video’s which really helped to embed the learning and have been useful resources.

This DDP training has helped me immensely within my work both supporting special guardianship / kinship carer families and young people and also in my work as an ISW in which I support adoptive families to embed and learn a variety of therapeutic parenting methods. A better understanding of DDP has helped me to create safer relationships – I have learnt to accept and meet people where they are on their journey which in turn has aided better intersubjective connections. The DDP training has been particularly helpful when working with larger networks and systems. It has helped me to stay grounded in a curious stance rather than moving towards problem solving and rescuing.

Many thanks to the FPSA for funding this training and allowing me to add DDP to my therapeutic toolkit.