

## **Final Report for FPSA – Funding for final year of Somatic Experiencing Training**

As an Occupational Therapist, I work across a variety of settings to support children and their families. This includes helping adopted and fostered children through the Adoption Support Fund and working in a school for students aged 7 to 19, all of whom have Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs). Many of these students have faced multiple unsuccessful school placements before coming to our school.

In my practice, I draw on a range of approaches, including core OT assessment and intervention models, Sensory Integration, Sensory Attachment Intervention, Polyvagal Theory, and relational neuroscience. Through supervision sessions, I was introduced to Somatic Experiencing, a therapeutic model that immediately resonated with the needs of the children and families I work with. Somatic Experiencing is a body-based approach that helps individuals process trauma by using techniques like body tracking, titration, and pendulation, based on the work of Peter Levine.

Since qualifying I have been using the training with my clients. An example of this is working with a child who had a history of complex trauma, struggling with anxiety and frequent behavioural outbursts both at school and at home. After building rapport, I introduced Somatic Experiencing (SE), guiding the child through body awareness exercises and helping them track physical sensations in response to stress. During one session, the child became overwhelmed recalling a traumatic memory, and we used SE techniques like titration and pendulation to help them process the emotion without shutting down. Over time, the child became more attuned to their body's signals and their reactions to stress lessened. Their anxiety and behavioural challenges significantly improved, and they expressed feeling more "in control" of their emotions, returning to school with increased resilience. This experience highlighted the transformative power of SE in helping young people process trauma at their own pace.

After completing three years of training in Somatic Experiencing, I can honestly say it's been life-changing, both personally and professionally. A key component of the training is undergoing our own process with Somatic Experiencing, including personal sessions and supervision, which has deepened my understanding of trauma and how to support others in healing.

I'm excited to integrate Somatic Experiencing into my current work with young people and families, and I'm also looking forward to expanding this approach into a private practice to reach even more individuals. I'm incredibly grateful to the FPSA for funding my final year of training and would highly recommend this course to others. I'm eager to continue developing a practice that incorporates this powerful approach to healing.

Children's Occupational Therapist