

Course: Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) Level 1

Provider: Adoption Plus

Trainer: Vicky Sutton

Dates: 24/03/25 – 28/03/2025 (4 days)

My job title: Senior Social Worker, Trauma Focused Fostering Team

Attending this course has been very supportive to my role within a specialist fostering support team and it has provided me with opportunities to learn and understand principles of DDP and its core framework such as the role that the PACE model plays within this therapeutic approach. It has been important to learn how this approach forms a vital role in supporting and promoting healthy relationships between young people and their caregivers, also within the network around the young person who will also have an influence on the way the child is perceived by other professionals in the young person's daily life.

The trainer helped us to understand the importance of providing safe, consistent and open dialogue which promotes honesty, clarity and vulnerability from the caregiver to the young person. The need for us to model this through listening and attuning to the messages being given by the caregiver and young person was also emphasised throughout the training sessions. Typically, in my professional role, there is pressure to provide solution-based approaches, however, what I learnt from DDP is that holding space and connecting with feelings is of greatest benefit to the caregiving system as this creates opportunity for co-regulation which caregivers then offer more effectively to the young person they care for. The videos of Dan Hughes in practice were extremely helpful in modelling the therapeutic approach in action.

We had the opportunity to take part on role plays during the sessions to explore the different perspectives of those involved in DDP work i.e. the young person, the caregiver, and the professional/therapist. I found this to be very helpful as it highlighted the need to remain focused and engaged on what the young person needed and/or the caregiver rather than focusing on what I might feel needed to be 'fixed'. Well thought out explanation and application of the PACE model (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy) provided much more accessibility for use in practice.

I really feel encouraged by the training in my practice as it has given me affirmation that my curious approach towards supporting young people and their caregivers is essential, and it has also provided me with much needed clarity and theoretical underpinning. I am better able to conceptualise my understanding which aids practical delivery in fast paced practice such as social work. I am grateful for the opportunity this course has given me to develop my skills and improve potential outcomes for young people and their support network. I hope to continue this learning forward as I can deeply see the benefit of this way of connecting with others.