

**Foundation for PSA – Post-training report
September 2025**

Clinical Psychologist – working in residential care and school

Training course: Child Attachment and Play Assessment – online training with Steve Farnfield, Fan Zang and Ben Grey. Eight days training with between session tasks to support reliable coding.

Completion date: Completed training on 17th June 2025

Summary of the training:

The CAPA training provides a structured play-based assessment and observation schedule to assign self-protective or attachment strategies that children and adolescents may use. The attachment strategies codings are based on the Dynamic-Maturation Model of attachment (Pat Crittenden). These strategies support developing formulations and intervention planning for mental health difficulties, aiming to increase flexible use of attachment strategies that can adapt to the context young people are in. Some therapeutic approaches can reinforce attachment strategies and reduce flexibility, a key goal of mental health treatment.

The training provided an overview of the DMM model, attachment, and the development of play-based assessments. The training was a mixture of online presentations and multiple video presentations to show variation of both normative presentations and high levels of strategies associated with higher risk of mental health needs. I learnt how to observe subtle signs of physiological arousal, social engagement signals, discourse, relationship with interviewer and mentalising as part of coding attachment strategies. A significant part of the course was to practice coding videos which has increased confidence in applying these principles. I also attended tutorials to support my learning and review practice codings.

Experience of training:

The training has been very challenging theoretically, due to learning new languages and theories. It has been invaluable to use the training to draw on the experience of the trainers and a mentor who holds a similar role in residential care. The training has been developed and the CAPA is being used for adolescents, so it has been helpful to develop and apply this in my practice with adolescents.

I have begun to integrate play-based assessments into my assessments in my role for new young people coming into the homes and school. I now use the CAPA principles to support the therapeutic care plans for our children, increasing the rationale for different interventions with Psychology, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy.

In the future, I am continuing to work to achieve reliable coder status, which will further increase the quality in developing this assessment. This will increase the quality of the interventions and efficacy. I will also share my knowledge from the training within my clinical teams to support their knowledge of attachment strategies and assessment. I am very grateful for the support of the FPSA and would like to thank you for the grant to support this training. I would have no hesitation in recommending the training to others.