

Training Attended: Sensory Attachment Intervention (SAI) for Adults and Adolescents – Foundation Level.

Venue: hybrid – 4 days online and 3 days in-person at the SAI Centre in Ash Cottage.

Trainers: Eadaoin Breathnach and Chris West, Consultant Occupational Therapists with extensive experience and knowledge in sensory integration, attachment and trauma.

Background:

As a Senior OT working in CAMHS, understanding the principles of sensory processing in the context of development, mental health and attachment is integral to supporting young people to participate in daily life. Many young people attending the service present with difficulties with emotional and sensory regulation making engagement in talking based therapies significantly difficult. Many young people require support with self-regulating their nervous system before being able to engage in higher cognitive based therapies.

The Course; SAI for Adults and Adolescents:

Attending this course has been a brilliant addition to my clinical skillset as an OT.

The course content included: background information of stress systems and the Polyvagal theory, The Just Right State (JRS) Programme, theory of sensory processing and theory of attachment.

The information was delivered in an understandable fashion through verbal, written and visual materials. Furthermore, the informal conversations about this therapy and the experiential learning from the JRS programme embedded the theoretical knowledge into lived experience and clinical practice.

Impact of the course on my practice:

Since attending this course in June 2025, my practice as an OT has shifted to incorporate aspects of sensory processing, attachment history, nervous system responses, trauma and development. I am beginning to incorporate these aspects into my practice within the wider service such as; intake assessments and ensuring the clinic spaces are sensory inclusive and trauma informed to all.

Furthermore, I am using the Just Right State programme with young people who have experienced childhood adversity to support regulation and participation in daily life. This programme allows me to incorporate tailored and client centred interventions to young people and their families. Additionally, I am planning to deliver the Just Right State Programme to clinicians on the team to support staff to care for their own regulation needs to support co-regulation within the CAMHS service.

I am eternally grateful to FPSA for supporting me to complete this training. SAI training has not only supported me in delivering high quality care to service users and their families but has also supported my team's understanding of regulation. Lastly, attending this training has been pivotal for me in sustaining interest, passion and curiosity in my career as an OT.