

ADHD Assessor Course

Overview of the activity

The FPSA grant supported my participation in the ADHD Assessor Course delivered by Autism Services Group. This training formed part of my continuing professional development as an occupational therapist working within neurodevelopmental services. The course focused on ADHD assessment, diagnostic criteria, formulation, and the translation of assessment outcomes into meaningful, functional recommendations that directly align with occupational therapy practice.

Learning gained

The training significantly deepened my understanding of ADHD across the lifespan and its impact on executive functioning, emotional regulation, organisation, daily routines, education, employment, and relationships. Importantly, the course was highly relevant to occupational therapy, as it consistently linked diagnostic understanding to functional impact and day-to-day participation rather than focusing solely on symptoms.

A key strength of the training was its coverage of medication management. This included understanding different medication options, expected benefits, potential side effects, and the functional implications of medication use. From an occupational therapy perspective, this learning strengthened my ability to support individuals to understand how medication may affect routines, attention, energy levels, sleep, emotional regulation, and engagement in daily occupations.

The course placed strong emphasis on formulation and communication, supporting clear, accessible explanations that help individuals and families understand how ADHD affects everyday life. Throughout the training, the close overlap between ADHD and autism presentations was consistently highlighted. It was strongly advised that ADOS-2 training should be undertaken alongside ADHD assessor training, as comprehensive and ethical neurodevelopmental assessment requires competence across both pathways.

Impact on my practice

This learning has already had a positive impact on my practice. I am more confident in supporting individuals through ADHD assessment, explaining diagnostic outcomes in occupational terms, and identifying practical strategies that support participation, independence, and wellbeing. My clinical reasoning has strengthened, particularly in recognising when ADHD traits may coexist with or mask autistic differences, and when further autism assessment is indicated.

Impact on service users and carers

Service users benefit from clearer explanations of how ADHD affects their daily lives and from recommendations that feel relevant, practical, and achievable. Carers benefit from improved understanding, reduced uncertainty, and guidance that supports advocacy and informed decision-making. Importantly, the training has improved my ability to recognise complex or overlapping neurodevelopmental profiles, reducing the risk of partial or delayed understanding of needs.

Wider impact and future development

The course reinforced that ADHD and autism assessments are most effective when undertaken within an integrated neurodevelopmental framework. Without ADOS-2 competence, there is a risk that autistic traits may be overlooked or misattributed. Completing ADOS-2 training is therefore a necessary next step to ensure safe, accurate, and holistic assessment practice, and to strengthen occupational therapy's contribution within multidisciplinary teams.

Reflection on FPSA funding

The FPSA grant was instrumental in enabling me to access this training at a critical stage in my professional development. As a solo parent with limited financial flexibility, the funding removed a significant barrier and allowed me to prioritise high-quality learning with direct impact on practice. I am extremely grateful for this support, which has strengthened my confidence, competence, and ability to support neurodivergent individuals more effectively.