

## **Report for Funding for 2017-2018**

### **Thanks**

As a social worker, working in a child and Adolescent mental health team, I am most grateful for the funding I received from the FPSA. I qualified in 1996 and since then I have accessed a large amount of in-house training, as well as self-directed learning. However, I have felt quite stuck in terms of my learning and development. As a parent and part time worker, I could in no way have afforded to access this course without the support of the FPSA.

### **Masters in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy, second year**

This course introduces three approaches (person centred approach, attachment theory and cognitive behaviour therapy), within an integrative framework. The person centred approach uses counselling skills to create a therapeutic relationship based on unconditional positive regard. This is enormously helpful in working with children and young people who have experienced trauma and abuse and those who have little regard for themselves. I have also found that this supports my work with families as part of a reflective team.

A deeper understanding of attachment has helped me to recognise how the attachment issues of parents have impacted and continue to impact on their relationships with their children. It informs the way that I support families in understanding the meaning of their children's behaviour. It also helps inform our team's complex case discussions, as an understanding of attachment within the family helps identify where support is most needed and why families might struggle to address this.

Within the first year I learnt to use cognitive behaviour therapy, combined with an understanding of attachment patterns, to create an approach which is therapeutic, person centred and compassionate. The second year is building on this skill, with a growing understanding of a broader range of issues. Within my placement in a school, as well as in my work as a social worker in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health team, I feel that my practice has been revitalised, strengthened and refreshed, and that my knowledge is benefitting my cases, my colleagues and the teams that I work with. This in turns has released a different type of energy, enthusiasm and sense of direction within my practice.

West Nottinghamshire is an area that has experienced a great many challenges, stemming from poverty and deprivation. The families and young people that we work with have experienced multigenerational difficulties, often including domestic violence, neglect, sexual abuse, alcohol and drug use and parental mental health problems. The course has been unbelievably helpful in allowing me to manage complex cases in a well-informed, analytical manner which keeps the welfare of the child or young person at the forefront. This is further underpinned by continued access to new and current research and developments within the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

I am currently applying for support to attend the final year of this course, which will include an extended period of clinical placement within a school and within CAMHS, as well as a dissertation which will look at the use of silence within an integrative practice.

Helen McEleny, CAMHS social worker, January 2018