

Report for Funding for PG Diploma in Integrative Child Psychotherapy, 2017/18.

I would like to express my gratitude to FPSA for their generous funding, which has enabled me to progress in psychotherapy training.

I work as a Practitioner in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team. In my post I offer clinical assessment and intervention as well as a range of therapeutic interventions. My core training is in Social Work and I have undertaken post qualifying, short-term trainings in different therapeutic approaches. I found that these models didn't always quite fit for many of the more complex children I was working with. Humanistic Integrative Psychotherapy recognises that the quality of the therapeutic relationship is of central importance, rather than a specific model of intervention, and this longer term intensive training encourages a greater understanding and appreciation of the child's internal world and wider systems.

This training has helped me to develop skills in integrating different approaches such as CBT, Mindfulness and Psychodynamic Psychotherapy and I am able to offer a more person-centred service; as well as adding a range of new skills such as sand tray and creative/play based techniques to my toolbox.

The core relational components of the course have supported me to deepen my understanding of the therapeutic relationship; and specialist supervision as well as the intensive personal therapy requirements of the course have challenged me to continue to reflect on and develop my own practice. Experiencing what it feels like to be a therapy 'service user' has been significant in my learning in a way that I could not have understood without the opportunity to experience this. This has also increased my empathy for parents in thinking about their own early experiences and attachments and how this influences them currently.

One of the more significant changes to my practice during study has been the way I think about and approach therapy planning. This training has helped me to articulate my knowledge and skills in a clear framework, and evidence the use of a broad range of theories and research such as attachment theory, neuroscience research and trauma and utilise these to better understand and meet the needs of the children and families accessing our service.

I have been able to share new learning and ideas with my wider team, particularly in case discussions and assessment relating to complex children, for example those with unmet pre-verbal needs or who could not make use of traditional talking therapies. I received feedback from my colleagues that having a team member who is continuing to develop and share new ideas and thinking is both inspiring and energising to the team, and I am passionate about continuing to share this experience.

I have very recently moved to a role where I will be working therapeutically with looked after children, and am passionate about this area of work. I am aware that looked after children have some of the poorest long-term outcomes for mental health and emotional wellbeing given their adverse early experiences and the ongoing barriers that they face. I hope that my continued learning and development will enable me to provide evidence

based, best practice interventions to these children, their carer's and the wider network of professionals who support them.

With Thanks
L. Robinson