

Report for the FPSA 2016-2017

Firstly, I would like to thank the FPSA for the wonderful opportunity their funding provided me with to undertake excellent training relevant to my work as a Social Worker in a CAMHS team.

I undertook a one year post graduate skills training in Cognitive Analytical Training. This course consisted of:

- 10 Training Days throughout the year commencing with a weekend in September, one Saturday in October, a weekend in November and one Saturday per month thereafter (excluding December)
- Weekly one and a half hour supervision in groups of three
- 30 hours of peer learning groups i.e. one 3-hour meeting per month
- Personal mini therapy with an accredited CAT therapist (3 sessions)

The course included the following topics:

- CAT understanding of the development of the 'self' in infant psychology
- CAT model of psychological development and psychopathology
- The development of practical skills in reformulation and the use of CAT tools and techniques
- The use of transference and counter transference in promoting the therapeutic alliance, collaboration and therapeutic change
- Working with complex mental health problems e.g. eating disorders, borderline personality disorder
- Contextual reformulation - issues that impact on treatment including team / staff relations with clients and each other.

Course requirements:

As part of the course, I complete three 16 session CAT therapy cases, and two written assignments.

Reflection:

I found this course to be incredible helpful in my work with adolescents presenting with moderate to severe mental health difficulties. It is a relational therapy and as such it emphasises the therapeutic benefit of using the therapy relationship to help the client not only identify their patterns of relating but also to practice new patterns of relating to self and others within the therapy room.

It is a brief, typically 16-24 session model of psychotherapy applicable to a wide range of mental health difficulties. The practice of CAT involves a collaborative therapeutic relationship which is very much in line with my social work training, values and ethics.

CAT therapy requires active participation in order to create a joint narrative and diagrammatic reformulation of a patient's difficulties. Maladaptive patterns originating from early childhood are identified and their repetition in current relationships and self management is explored.

I found that the training has also increased my own self reflection regarding my patterns of relating and how they impact not only on my life but on my engagement with clients.

The CAT model has also been incredibly useful on the MDT team to help with reflective practice. I have been able to bring the CAT concepts to team discussions regarding young people and use the mapping tools to help us identify perhaps where we are getting stuck as professionals.

This course was intensive and energetic and I left each training day with enthusiasm and a greater understanding.

Claire Foley
Social Work Team Leader