

## **Advancing Professional Practice at Sheffield Hallam University.**

1-year course that contributed to a Masters degree (60 credits). Dissertation hand in date was 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and results were received on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

### **Purpose of the Training:**

I decided to complete the final year of a part time Masters degree with financial support from the FPSA for the course fees. The Advancing Professional Practice (APP) course allows health professionals to perform their own research based on a specific area of their own practice by writing a dissertation. This course equips individuals with specialist knowledge and expertise through performing their own research and also further enhances their clinical skills in their chosen area of practice.

As part of this course I decided to undertake a systematic literature review examining the effectiveness of Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) at reducing self-harm and suicidality in adolescents receiving treatment in community outpatient settings. This topic was of particular interest of mine as, at the time of undertaking my Masters degree, I had worked within a community CAMHS crisis team and often worked with young people displaying high risk behaviours. Within the team, we frequently utilised DBT skills training with young people as part of home-based treatment (HBT) undertaken within the role and I was keen to understand the effectiveness of the intervention further. Consequently, I was keen to develop a deeper understanding of the therapy and its evidence-base through examination of the studies undertaken in this area. I was also eager to progress with my own professional and academic development and believed that the APP course would contribute to this.

My workplace supported my application to the FPSA on the basis that any research findings would help support the development of the crisis team in which interventions were effective and evidence based. As I was awarded a distinction for the paper, my academic supervisor has provided feedback that suggests the paper could provide a significant contribution to my field. I have therefore decided to pursue publication of the paper in an accredited journal for mental health of adolescents to share my work with other professionals and academics.

### **Summary of the Training:**

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy is an intervention founded in America by Marsha Linehan within the 90's. DBT has been proven to be an effective intervention for women who are diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD). BPD is a diagnosis that is known to be associated with high risk behaviours to self, such as self-harming and suicidality. As DBT evidence has developed a strong evidence base in adults, a modified version for adolescents has since been developed known as DBT-A.

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy for Adolescents DBT-(A) was shown to have a significant impact on reducing self-harm in all 9 papers reviewed and was also proven to be statistically significant in most papers at reducing suicidal ideation. DBT-(A) was also proven to be superior to all over comparator treatment modalities used within the systematic review.

### **Experience of Training:**

Completing the APP course has significantly enhanced my researching skills. I have developed an advanced proficiency in applying research to practice, as well as an enhanced and in-depth knowledge of DBT-(A). I now feel confident in my ability to understand research papers and the systematic review process. I have also developed an extensive theoretical knowledge of DBT and its literature base amongst adolescents, which has enhanced my ability as a practitioner working with young people.

While completing a part-time Masters alongside challenging roles has been difficult at times, I am so pleased to have had the opportunity to achieve this level of qualification and am very grateful for the FPSA for sponsoring me to do so. I wish to continue to apply my learnt knowledge to practice within my new role in the MHST and plan to teach others within my team about my research findings of DBT-(A). I anticipate that my proposed journal article summarising my systematic review will help me to share my findings amongst fellow professionals in the field.

I would recommend anyone considering attending this course to remember that the journey is long and arduous however has proven to be a rewarding and fulfilling accomplishment.

Thank you again FPSA for giving me the opportunity to achieve this feat.