

Sensory Attachment Intervention

Background:

I am an Occupational Therapist working in a secure children's Home with young people who are either on welfare sections or under criminal grounds. The service has 20 beds in total, with 5 being welfare and the rest being for young offenders. I also work in the East Midlands Forensic CAMHS team, holding a caseload of young people with complex mental health, Autism and Learning Disabilities who are at risk of offending or already known to youth offending.

Details of training:

The training completed was with the Sensory Attachment Interventions which was funding via the FPSA. The training was via Zoom due to the covid 19 restrictions that were still in place at the time of the training. It also allowed for more people from around the world to participate and share experiences which was very beneficial. The training took place of six days and was broken down into two days over three weeks due to the amount of information given and to practice techniques put in place.

The first two days of the training focussed on Attachment Informed Practice. The aims of these two days were to provide an introduction to attachment theory, to consider the importance of this within practice and using this to aid formulation and understanding of the needs of the young person. The Dynamic Maturational Model of Attachment and Adaptation (DMM) was discussed and from this we explored different attachment strategies and how best to understand and interpret behaviour of others, recognising all behaviour has a function. It was also discussed about how we need to recognise our own attachments and how these impact on our practice and work we families and young people.

The last four days of the training then focussed on Sensory Attachment Intervention (SAI) for Adults and Adolescents – Impact of Trauma on Regulation and Sensory Processing. The training was intensive and gave a comprehensive overview to the SAI model and the theories it is based upon, using theories of sensory integration to help form this. The Just Right State Programme and different assessment and formulation tools were also explored in detail and how we could practically apply this in our services. There was big focus upon sensory processing, modulation, and discrimination with a variety of practical activities that were explored using different materials, objects and techniques. These practical techniques were discussed about how they could be applied with young people and families but also for our own self-regulation as therapists and how to support our clients through co-regulation.

Experience and feedback:

I had a great experience of the training and am very grateful I was able to attend thanks to the FPSA. From the training I have already been able to inform and change my practice for the better, it has allowed me to explore different ways of thinking about behaviours I see and how the attachments and early development impact on behaviours of the young people I see daily. It has also allowed me to have a more in-depth knowledge which I have then been able to talk about with my colleagues and help to add into formulations and understandings of behaviours, giving others the information for understanding behaviours. I plan on exploring further training from the providers of SAI and how I can progress and develop me knowledge further in this area as it has made a big impact on my professional development and understanding.