

Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) training

Having accessed funding through the FPSA, I was able to attend Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) training. I'm a Clinical Nurse Specialist working on a community CAMHS team, working with young people up until 18 years of age who present with moderate to severe mental health difficulties. EMDR therapy is an evidence based integrative psychotherapy that was developed by an American clinical psychologist, Dr Francine Shapiro, in the 1980s. It is used to help people who are experiencing trauma, anxiety, panic, depression, PTSD etc., which are typical presentations of the young people who attend CAMHS. Through a standardised set of protocols, EMDR uses the combination of dual attention and bilateral stimulation, activating traumatic memories and help develop adaptive neutral networks to support resolution and integration of these memories.

EMDR training will enable me to seek professional accreditation as an EMDR Europe accredited practitioner. The training was delivered by Gus Murray (EMDR Europe Accredited Senior Trainer) in conjunction with a team of facilitators. The training was delivered over Zoom. The training was divided into 3 modules with Module 1 being held on 23rd, 24th and 25th of October 2023, with supervision on the 16th of November and 7th of December 2023. Module 2 was held on the 8th and 9th of January 2024 with supervision on the 15th of February 2024. Module 3 was held on 11th and 12th of March 2024 with supervision on 11th of April 2024, this being the date of completion of training.

The aims of this training were to learn the principles and practices of EMDR therapy and to become proficient in their use and to integrate EMDR therapy into your clinical practice. The first part of training focused on the theory of EMDR with ensuring familiarity of the phases of EMDR. There were workbooks provided with details and explanation of the phases, which is an invaluable resource. The presenters were always willing to answers any questions people may have had and case examples/videos were used to help demonstrate the phases in practice. The second part of the training involved separating into groups of 3 to take part in practicums, these groups were supervised by one of the co-facilitators and their guidance was always welcomed. The practicums provided a space for clinicians to practice the protocols and begin to use interweaves from their clinical practice with EMDR. I felt the practicums were definitely were the majority of the professional learning occurred as it provided a safe space for clinicians to understand and explore EMDR in practice.

I found this training incredibly interesting yet challenging at times. EMDR training has allowed me to expand my skill base as a clinician, enabling me to provide an evidence based trauma therapy to the young people who attend CAMHS. Whilst I'm still a novice in EMDR practice, I look forward to continuing to develop and hone my skills working towards obtaining accreditation as an EMDR practitioner. I would highly recommend this EMDR training to other clinicians planning to expand their skill base in trauma therapy.