FPSA Training Report: Theraplay Level One and Group Theraplay

Training: Theraplay Level One and Group Theraplay
Venue: Inspire Me Events – two days online and three days in person at Three Swans Hotel, 21 High Street, Market Harborough.
Dates: 29–30 September (online) and 5–7 October (in person)
Length: Five days (32.5 hours)
Trainers: Jo Williams and Helen Rodwell
Certification: Theraplay Level One and Group Theraplay
Date of completion: 7 October

Applicant's relevant qualifications:

- Postgraduate Certificate in Psychotherapeutic Studies (Distinction)
- Diploma in Psychotherapy (Child and Adolescent)
- Diploma in Psychotherapeutic Counselling (Child and Adolescent)

Applicant's professional role: UKCP Accredited Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist

Summary of the Training

Theraplay is a play-based, dyadic therapeutic approach that provides a developmentally attuned framework for helping children and young people and their caregivers strengthen relationships, rebuild trust and security, and develop self-worth.

Drawing on child development, attachment theory, polyvagal theory and developmental trauma, the training explored how Theraplay can support emotional regulation, connection and healing through positive relational experiences.

The training was structured around Theraplay's four core dimensions: Structure, Engagement, Nurture and Challenge, combining theory, demonstrations, video examples and experiential practice. These dimensions provide a framework for assessment, formulation, therapeutic planning, intervention and evaluation. The training also explored adaptations to meet diverse cultural and neurodivergent needs, alongside the application of Theraplay principles within group settings.

Experience of the Training and Relevance to Professional Practice

The training offered an excellent balance of theoretical learning and experiential practice, supporting my understanding and confidence in integrating Theraplay into my clinical work in an evidence-informed way.

I particularly valued the opportunity to develop a therapy plan, role-play interventions and engage in real-time clinical troubleshooting. This enabled me to consider how the approach could be applied and adapted to my current caseload, and I have already begun incorporating elements of the training into my practice.

I found the four core dimensions a particularly accessible and useful framework for informing assessment, clarifying therapeutic aims, planning interventions and evaluating their impact. Video examples brought the theoretical principles to life, while the trainers' openness and professional

humility in sharing the challenges, uncertainties and learning edges of clinical practice were particularly valuable. This offered an authentic insight into the realities of applying Theraplay and reinforced the importance of reflective practice, professional curiosity and ongoing learning. It also gave me confidence to begin integrating the approach, recognising that challenges are an inevitable and valuable part of therapeutic development.

Learning alongside colleagues from diverse professional backgrounds further highlighted the flexibility of the approach and encouraged creativity in considering its application across different settings and family needs.

Application to Current and Future Practice

Having worked therapeutically with children and young people for over nine years, my experience has increasingly reinforced the importance of involving parents and caregivers in the therapeutic process. Over the past eighteen months, I have been developing my dyadic work, recognising the importance of supporting relationships alongside the individual child.

Since completing the training, I have begun integrating Theraplay principles and activities into my work with children and young people. I intend to continue developing this approach, particularly within my dyadic work, and would welcome the opportunity to progress to Level Two to further extend my clinical skills.

I am extremely grateful to the FPSA for funding this valuable training, which has already had a positive impact on my clinical practice.