

Attachment Based Family Therapy

The workshop was facilitated by Maudsley Learning, ORTUS learning and events centre on 16 September 2019 and delivered by Dr Guy Diamond.

Dr Diamond is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and Associate Professor at Drexel University in the College of Nursing and Health Professions. At Drexel, he is the Director of the Center for Family Intervention Science (CFIS) and the former Director of the PhD program in Couple and Family Therapy. Dr. Diamond is the primary developer of Attachment-Based Family Therapy. He has received several federal, state and foundation grants to develop and test this model. Along with his co-authors, Drs. Gary Diamond and Suzanne Levy, Dr. Diamond has written the first book on ABFT, Attachment-Based Family Therapy for Depressed Adolescents, published by the American Psychological Association on October 2013. This book is available to purchase via internet and would prove to be a helpful aid with the practice following the attendance of the workshop.

ABFT is a manualized, empirically supported family therapy model specifically designed to target family and individual processes associated with adolescent suicide and depression.

Thanks to the support from the organisation I was able to attend 1-day workshop aimed at familiarising clinicians working with young people with mental health difficulties, with the manualised model of family intervention.

The workshop focused on each parts of the manual and was full of clinical examples and case studies supported by multiply channels of engagement and teaching/ learning.

During this workshop, I was familiarised with theoretical principles and clinical strategies that underpin the model. The active participation from the attendees was encouraged which has enhanced learning from others and asking questions with getting answers one might not thought about before.

The five treatment tasks that provide a road map for delivering psychotherapy has been backed by the evidence of how effectively and rapidly the intervention can bring about some change.

The five tasks consist of:

- Reframing the therapy to focus on interpersonal development.
- Building alliance with the adolescent.
- Building alliance with the parents.
- Facilitating conversations to resolve attachment ruptures.
- Promoting autonomy and competency in the adolescent.

Some of the learning objectives involved:

Being able to bring forward the theory of attachment and how this directly informs ABFT intervention.

Learning from video examples about the specific intervention in the five tasks has enhanced the 'tool kit' of systemic therapist by specific evidenced based techniques used at each stage of the intervention.

I have also learned how to facilitate some corrective attachment experiences which supported the communication and relationship re-framing/ re-conditioning between parents and children – potentially supporting emotion regulation, de-escalating conflicts and improving overall communication.

The attendance to the training has reconnected me with some of the theories and practices which has been inactive in my 'toolbox' for some time and helped to refresh some knowledge too. This has inspired me to apply different ways of working in my practice and reinvigorated some of the conversations in the process groups within systemic therapy team.

This experience wouldn't be possible without the funding I received which I'm very grateful for.