

Mentalization-Based Treatment for Adolescence (MBT-A)

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

23-24 November 2020, Online via Zoom

Music Psychotherapist

Mentalizing refers to our ability to attend to mental states in ourselves and in others as we attempt to understand our own actions and those of others. If we are mentalizing successfully, we are able to understand what is going on in our own minds and in the minds of other people, and realise how this is affecting the emotions, thoughts, and actions of ourselves and others. In some mental health disorders, individuals can be impaired in their ability to mentalize. This can lead to misunderstandings regarding emotions, thoughts and actions, and result in breakdowns in interactions and relationships.

This course introduced professionals who work in the field of adolescent mental health to mentalization in the context of adolescence and provided an understanding of MBT and its application in self harm, trauma, and family work. It was led by international experts in the field of MBT with adolescents. It gave an overview of MBT-A, an understanding of the specific complexities about working with adolescents, an understanding of the development of mentalization and the relevance of it in relationships and in the maintenance of self-esteem, affect regulation and impulse control. The course leaders were very engaging and used a variety of presentations and practical role play scenarios to demonstrate the theory and techniques for working with this client group.

I currently work as a music psychotherapist in a CAMHS inpatient unit with young people aged 12-18 who have an Eating Disorder. Many of these young people have issues with low mood and self-harm, as well as anxiety and low self-esteem, and have difficulties in regulating their emotions. Mentalization will therefore help them to be more aware of their thoughts and feelings, which will help with their recovery and ultimately improve their mental health and social function.

I am very grateful for the FPSA in providing the opportunity for me to attend this training. It will be very relevant to my everyday practice and I would recommend it to any professional working within the field of adolescent mental health.