Qualifications: BSc Psychology and Counselling skills, Youth MHFA, Level 2 Understanding Children and YP's MH

Job Role: Assistant Social Worker, therapeutic adoption support

Training attended: Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Practice – Level One

Venue: Education Development Centre, Walsall Children's Services

Length of course/Date completed: 4-day 28hr training – 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st October 2022

Resulting award: Level One certificate

Trainer: Dr Sarah Kildea, DClinPsy

Summary of training:
The aim of DDP level one was to introduce the core components and theoretical foundations of DDP and to begin to consider application of the model in therapeutic work with families and as a parenting framework. The opportunity to roleplay and reflect on these core components was offered throughout as well as being given the opportunity to practice communication skills and the implementation of PACEful practice. Topics covered included developmental trauma, intersubjectivity, blocked trust, attachment theory, patterns of attachment, understanding guilt and shame, working with parents in blocked care, focusing on parents' attachment history, and PACE parenting. The delivery of this training was split across information sharing and psychoeducation, large and small group work, reflective role play, observation of trainers' clinical work through video and the use of video clips across all topic areas. DDP Level One provides a foundation whereby you can use skills learnt in DDP informed practice or go on to complete DDP level two and the practicum to become a certified DDP Practitioner.

Experience of training:
My experience of DDP was incredibly useful to my work. As the focus was primarily on children who have experienced developmental trauma ('looked after' or adopted children) I found all content to be applicable to my role within a post adoption support team. DDP as a therapy and parenting framework is hugely focused on communication between practitioner, parent and young person and is therefore extremely helpful when working with adolescents. Most video clips and examples of DDP in action showed were exploring a dyad between a parent and teenager which shows the many realms of application when working with adolescents.

I have found that the principles of DDP have enhanced my understanding around working with young people with low self-esteem and attachment difficulties, as one of the primary underpinnings is promoting healing of relational trauma through new attachments. I feel this theoretical approach will greatly inform my practice when supporting adolescents who have experienced early life trauma, and the content learnt can also be shared with parents and caregivers which in turn will hopefully have a positive impact on any young person's home life. I intend to use the framework around PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) in my direct work with adolescents as well as promoting this parenting style with parents/caregivers on my case load.

In future I would very much like to continue with DDP training by completing Level 2, and possibly further down the line in my career consider completing the practicum to become a certified practitioner. DDP Level One not only provides a great understanding of the DDP model of practice (for those wishing to use this model in a therapeutic setting), but also offers rich information on

many other areas including attachment theory, developmental trauma and the impact of this, communication skills, working with parents and much more. I would therefore strongly recommend this training for any professionals working within the realm of supporting looked after/adopted children and their caregivers, childhood trauma, attachment, or general therapeutic support for families/adolescents. I am incredibly appreciative of the FPSA for granting funding to access this training and am sure that it will become an integral part of my practice. I have thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity of continued professional development.