

Fourth Year MA

integrative Child and Adolescence Counselling and Psychotherapy.

January - December 2022

Thank you to the generous grant awarded by the FPSA, having received partial funding for my fourth year of training, which has enabled me to continue my learning journey on the Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy programme at Terapia.

Summary of and reflections on training:

Module 4 has been balanced between learning academically, experiential learning and clinical work. The blending of each of those experiences has helped me to link and integrate theory into practice.

The programme involved the attendance of weekly teaching lectures and weekends. I completed 100 hours of supervised practice with young people. I also submitted two written essays and a reflective journal at the end of each term and a portfolio of the pieces of written work and clinical hours at the end of this year.

Upon completion of the fourth year of my training, I have achieved the following learning objectives which contribute to:

- develop competency in the understanding of psychopathology and mental health issues in relation to children and adolescents
- embed psychotherapeutic practice within a systemic framework

As part of the learning, I have broadened and deepened my understanding of different mental health disorders through a series of lectures delivered by a child and adolescent psychiatrist. As part of the assessment process, there was an examination where I demonstrated my knowledge of common disorders seen in children and adolescents – for example, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism and autistic spectrum disorders, depression, bipolar affective disorder, schizophrenia, OCD, anxiety disorders, and PTSD.

I have engaged in further learning specific to Gender Dysphoria and Eating Disorders which are prevalent among young people. From a clinical systemic perspective, I have thought about the interaction between genetics and environmental factors. As a psychotherapist, we need to think about the influence of parental approaches, attachment and family functioning.

The most challenging aspect of this year was the academic piece of work on psychological defences. Through the process of reading the literature, I gained an understanding of the range of different defences that individuals use as a way of protecting themselves from internal and psychological pain. Through the assessment process, the external marker was extremely complimentary of my academic essay and in his written feedback he said “This was a thoroughly convincing essay,

demonstrating great clinical and theoretical understanding, generally at the distinction level". On reflection on this academic task, I have expanded my knowledge and insight into psychological mechanisms which have strengthened my self-awareness as a therapist and enhanced my clinical practice now and in the future.

Use of training at work since:

As an experienced social worker within a specialist assessment and therapeutic multi-disciplinary team, I have been able to transfer my learning into my practice.

A large portion of young people I work with have been diagnosed with Autism. Since attending the training, I have been integrating my knowledge and techniques into practice with several of the young people I have been working with. My clinical approach brings an understanding of the autism state of mind, and I have felt more equipped to support my clients to make sense of their own emotional experiences.

My clinical work involves working with the family, which is integral to the therapeutic framework we work within. My training has enabled me to develop a proficiency in assessing the family, cultural and societal factors which impact the client and their emotional and behavioural functioning.

I have now completed four years of my psychotherapy training and will be progressing into my final year of the programme in January 2023. Personally, I feel much more confident in delivering psychotherapeutic work and I am looking forward to developing my skills and practice in this area.

I wish to say thank you again to FPSA for helping me on this journey, and the support has been invaluable in my work with my adolescent clients to help them make sense of their life experiences and develop a coherent narrative through different therapeutic approaches.

Social Worker, NSPCC, December 2022