

Attachment Based Family Therapy 12th – 14th October 2018 London, UK

I would like to firstly thank the FPSA for their generous funding to complete the level I am training in ABFT. The course was a 3-day programme, which provided foundational training for those wishing to achieve qualifications in ABFT. The training was led by a most engaging and knowledgeable by Dr Guy Diamond. Guy Diamond, PhD, is Professor Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and Associate Professor at Drexel University in the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Dr Diamond is the primary developer of, ABFT.

There is a strong evidence base for the effectiveness of ABFT for adolescents with depression and suicidality. ABFT is ideally suited as a psychological therapy for such young people and their parents as it aims to repair interpersonal ruptures and rebuild an emotionally protective secure based parent child relationship, thus increasing resilience. The rationale for ABFT rests on decades of research on adolescent development and attachment demonstrating that a secure attachment to family supports the welfare and functioning of adolescents.

ABFT has drawn from interpersonal theory, attachment theory, and emotion focused psychotherapy, in order to develop an empirically informed family therapy intervention. It is a very positive approach which respects and empowers parents and young people. The adolescent's need for both attachment and autonomy are the focus of treatment. Data show that ABFT is effective with the most troubled populations, including those who are severely depressed, have parents who are depressed, or who have a history of sexual abuse. The efficacy of ABFT in these cases is noteworthy as these young people often have not responded well to cognitive-behavioural therapy or medication. Attachment Based Family Therapy (ABFT) is showing great promise as an alternative treatment for adolescents with Anorexia Nervosa. The eating disorders team from the Maudsley are currently undertaking training in ABFT in order that they may offer this treatment to families for whom FBT has not worked. Attachment-Based Family Therapy (ABFT) is a 16-week treatment for youths ages 12-24.

There is a strong evidence base for the effectiveness of ABFT for adolescents with depression and suicidality. The National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) has determined that ABFT is a program with effective outcomes. ABFT is classified as a "proven practice" on the Promising Practices Network (PPN) run by the Rand Corporation.

The training encompassed an overview into the theoretical foundation of ABFT. Insights into the five treatment tasks and structures of the model. Insights were also provided into the specific phases within each treatment task. We had lively role play exercises applying specific strategies for facilitating the repair of interpersonal ruptures.

I currently work in a CAMHS and my role includes clinical interventions for young people with high risk and/or significant mental health difficulties. Many of the young people I work with have attachment difficulties and are referred to our inpatient setting due to the high-risk behaviours they display.

Completion of this training has enabled me to start to implement the approach with young people and their families. It has proven thus far to be a successful intervention. I am passionate about this approach and have seen the positive impact it can have with the families that I work with. I plan to work towards accreditation and am due to commence a supervision group in January 2019. Once again, I'd like to sincerely thank the FPSA for their support in my accessing this training.