

Report for funding of EMDR Europe Accredited Child Training

I kindly and generously received funding from Foundation for PSA to complete Level 1 (7th & 8th Nov 2018) and Level 2 (13th & 14th Nov 2019) of the EMDR Europe Accredited Child Training facilitated by Susan Darker-Smith. Level 2 must be completed at least 6 months after Level 1 in order to be able to apply and practice the skills conveyed in Level 1. Both trainings took place over the course of two days, overall the child training can be completed in 4 days. The prerequisite for attending the child training is the completion of the basic EMDR training for adults which I had done at point of applying for funding for the child training. I have now finished the child training and received a certificate of attendance. My intention is to work towards accreditation as EMDR therapist for children and young people.

The aim of the training was to provide EMDR practitioners with specific knowledge and skills to apply their basic training to the work with children / young people. This included age-specific adaptations (e.g. using play or drawing to process traumatic events) and working with parents, caregivers and systems around the child (Level 1). The goals of Level 2 were to learn how to develop safe place imagery, attachment narratives and to understand the adaptations necessary for working with children on the autistic spectrum and looked after children. The learning was facilitated through power point presentations, discussions of videos and case studies and role plays in pairs.

I am a clinical psychologist working in a mental health charity for children, young people and families, with specialism in developmental and acute trauma. I am trained in trauma-focused Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy, Narrative Exposure Therapy and Mentalization-Based Treatment for families and children. I work predominantly with children and young people who have suffered complex developmental trauma due to intra-familial abuse and neglect. I also work with minor asylum seekers and refugees with history of trauma.

I am very grateful that I was able to attend the child-specific EMDR training as it has proven highly relevant and helpful to my therapeutic work. The training has markedly increased my knowledge of how to use and adapt EMDR to adolescents who are emotionally younger than their chronological age. It has supported my understanding of how to work towards processing difficult and traumatic experiences with children who have suffered developmental trauma. Especially the teaching on attachment narratives has been highly relevant to my work with young people who have moved in and out of care and who have histories of disrupted attachment relationships. Using EMDR with adolescents has been incredibly helpful because young people often do not want to talk in detail about difficult or traumatic events. Often, they experience shame and mistrust. The emotion regulation work and tools to increase a sense of self-worth and safety have been invaluable. The training has also left me more confident in terms of using creative means with children and young people (e.g. drawing).

Beyond my direct clinical work, the training has also put me in good stead to broaden the treatment pathway for traumatised children and young people in my organisation. Once I have consolidated

my EMDR therapy skills, I would like to conduct clinical research into the effectiveness of EMDR for children and young people, given the need for further evidence in this field.