

SAI Training

Personal Details.

I have a BSc (Hons) Degree in Occupational Therapy. I currently work in the role of Lead Specialist Occupational Therapist for an Inpatient CAMHS Service. Within our service we have three wards, an 8 bedded Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), a 12 bedded General Adolescent Unit (GAU) and a 12 bedded Specialist Eating Disorder Unit (SEDU) for 13–18-year-olds. Within my role I hold a caseload of young people as well as provide clinical leadership to the occupational therapy service.

Details of The Training Attended.

Foundation PSA kindly funded my attendance at the 6-day Sensory Attachment Intervention for Adults and Adolescents. The course was hosted virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions and was split over 3 x 2-day blocks. The training was attended on 21st and 22nd April, 6th and 7th May, 20th and 21st May 2021.

The first two days of the training focussed on Attachment Informed Practice and was presented by Helen Johnson. The aims of these two days were to provide an introduction to attachment theory, to consider the importance of this within practice and using this to aid formulation and understanding of the needs of the clients in your own service. A detailed overview of the Dynamic Maturational Model of Attachment and Adaptation (DMM) was given and from this we explored different attachment strategies and how best to understand and interpret behaviour of others, recognising all behaviour has a function.

The last four days of the training then focussed on Sensory Attachment Intervention (SAI) for Adults and Adolescents – Impact of Trauma on Regulation and Sensory Processing and was presented by Eadaoin Bhreathnach and Chris West. The training was intensive and gave a comprehensive overview to the SAI model and the theories it is based upon. There was a focus upon sensory processing, modulation, and discrimination with a variety of practical activities intertwined across the four days to consider our own self-regulation as therapists but how to support our clients through co-regulation and developing strategies to promote self-regulation. The Just Right State Programme and different assessment and formulation tools were also explored in detail.

Experience of The Training.

I am very grateful for the experience to be able to attend this course as I believe it will make a huge impact to not only the service, I provide the young people I work with but also the wider team supporting those young people. I would highly recommend this training to other occupational therapists particularly those working in a CAMHS setting, I think this gives such an insightful view into young people particularly in mental health services and really helps to unpick the behaviours and challenges we face as clinicians working with this client group and aids our understanding of how this experience must be for them but how we can best treat them too. I left the training feeling enthused and full of ideas of how I could best utilise this to shape my practice, train the team around me and how I offer support to the team too. I would love to be able to go on to do further relevant training in this area and access the support of others who are experienced in delivering this. My plan for this next year to try and embed my learning into practice includes offering training and the Just Right State Programme to the staffing team and then adapting the Just Right State Programme for the needs of our young people to formulate a group focussing particularly on nurturing spaces and modulation.