

Post Training Report

Firstly I would like to thank the FPSA for their extremely kind offer to provide me with funding to complete my Cognitive Analytical Therapy training from 2016-2017.

Following the FPSA's funding donation, I have been able to complete my second year of training in Cognitive Analytical Therapy, leading to the award ACAT Practitioner Diploma. This excellent training was provided by Catalyse (CAT North), and accredited by ACAT, for the CAT Practitioner Course. This consisted of 11 training days over the course of one year, held on the Manchester University Campus, where I travelled up on the train periodically. This enabled me to access some of the best training the CAT world has to offer, with seminal speakers and trainers providing inspiring teaching throughout. I currently work as Specialist Occupational Therapist (MSc) working in a mental health team, which focusses its work on young people aged 14-25 years. This age group reflects a pivotal time in psychological development, and we are passionate about early intervention and recovery. We work with young people with a variety of difficulties, such as emerging personality disorders, and hope to provide the opportunity for individuals to receive support and therapy, where possible. The evidence base shows that Cognitive Analytical Therapy is an effective, time-limited, focussed psychological therapy that can be helpful for individuals with various difficulties, including eating disorders and emerging personality disorder. The relational focus of CAT appeals to young people, who are often struggling in these areas of their lives. The collaborative nature of the work, as well as the letters and diagrams, also appears to encourage active engagement in the therapy. Within our team alone, we have had some very positive success using this therapy in our work, with the results often leading to recovery/discharge from the service.

The training provided consisted of workshops, seminars, peer group work, personal learning, supervision, clinical practice and completing my own personal therapy. I have worked with 8 supervised cases in total, and completed coursework including case studies and essays. In the second year, I developed my own essay topic, and focussed on endings in CAT/therapy, which I hope to publish in the near future. Some of my favourite teaching included thinking about Narcissistic Personality Disorder, as well as working with state shifts in the therapy room, CAT consultancy, and the therapeutic use of self. I thoroughly enjoyed the variety of teaching available, including audio recordings of sessions with therapists, and role play demonstrations by the trainers, who have a wealth of experience behind them. We were always encouraged to contribute and to think for ourselves. Working and learning with other therapists has developed my confidence and knowledge base immeasurably. One of the biggest things I have taken away from the training is the confidence to use myself more in therapy, and to listen to my own thoughts and feelings as a means of understanding what is going on for the young person. I have also become even more interested in psychoanalytical thought, and its applications with this subject group. In addition to this, CAT is very helpful in its applications to teams/organisations, and can be used on a consultancy level working in this way, or as a team with specific complex cases. I am eagerly anticipating the opportunity to complete some CAT consultancy work in the future.

In terms of its application now, I will be able to offer CAT therapy to the young people being treated by our team. This not only adds to the variety of interventions we can offer young people, but also increases their access to psychological therapy. As the area in which I work would be considered an area of high social deprivation, being able to offer young people access to psychological therapies,

such as CAT, perhaps also goes some way to address some of the equality and diversity issues we face in this country: Meaning, psychotherapy treatment is not solely reserved for those who can afford it. This is something that is close to my heart.

I am looking forward to practicing CAT on a regular basis as another tool for understanding and working with young people. I am considering further psychotherapy training in the future. This opportunity has been fantastic throughout, the year has gone by so quickly, and I am forever grateful.

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