

FPSA Report – Funding received towards final year of MA Art Psychotherapy Practice 2016-2017

I would like to start by extending my immense gratitude to the FPSA for awarding funding towards the final year of my Master's Degree in Art Psychotherapy Practice. Without funding from the FPSA I know I would have faced financial difficulty during the final year of my course. The support I received allowed me to focus my time and attention on my studies and placement work. I am soon to be qualified as an Art Therapist, and I know that the skills I have learned and the experiences I have had on my placements will be greatly beneficial to my future work with children, adolescents and adults within mental health services.

Art Therapy is a form of psychotherapy which involves expressing your emotions and anxieties through artistic media. During my time on the course I have learned that this form of intervention can be extremely beneficial to children and young people with both mental health and learning difficulties. The fact that this form of therapy does not rely heavily on verbal communication means that children are able to express things that they find difficult to put into words, or do not have the communicative abilities to express.

I have completed the course over 3 years Part-Time, which has involved one day per week attending University, and 2 days per week working as an Art Therapy Trainee on placement within various mental health and learning disability services.

Whilst training I have also been employed as an Arts Therapies Assistant, working in a Children and Young People's Mental Health Treatment and Assessment Unit. The skills I have developed have definitely improved my ability to work therapeutically with the children and young people in my capacity as an Arts Therapies Assistant, and I hope to continue working in this setting as a qualified Art Therapist in the future.

During my learning I have developed an interest in how Art Therapy can enrich and further develop the emotional vocabulary of children and adults with learning and communication difficulties, and hope to further develop my work in this area. I have found that through art making, clients have been able to expand their emotional understanding, which may start as an understanding of only a few basic emotions and how to express them.

I feel extremely fortunate to have received support from the FPSA, and I am extremely excited about becoming qualified and furthering my work within mental health and learning disability services for both children and adults.

Toni Harrison – Arts Therapies Assistant, North East England.