TWO-DAY INTENSIVE COURSE IN TODDLER DEVELOPMENT & PARENT-TODDLER GROUPS IN THEORY & PRACTICE

MODULE PROGRAMME & STUDENT HANDBOOK

Introduction

Toddlerhood is a phase of conflict and passion that is challenging to the child, parents and practitioners. It is a phase of transition in which attachments can be strengthened, revisited and repaired for those who have had a difficult start. During this critical period of development, strong feelings need to be processed and managed. The way in which these feelings are understood and negotiated influences the child’s relationships with others throughout life.

The course is designed for professionals working with toddlers and pre-school children and their families, who are looking to extend their knowledge and expertise in the field. The course addresses the pre-school child’s development and the parent-child relationship. It draws upon techniques of direct observation of parent-child and practitioner-child interactions to assess normal and at-risk development, and to promote evidence-based practice.

Aims

The course aims to promote the understanding of toddler and the pre-school child’s development and the parent-child relationship. It aims to enhance professional skills in assessing deviations from age-appropriate development and assessing risk which require early intervention. The course includes what is involved in setting up and evaluating a parent-toddler group based on the Anna Freud Centre approach, and show the current evidence base for this approach.

Course Structure

The course comprises of presentations and workshops. The presentations aim to cover main theoretical concepts and DVD clips are used to illustrate their applications to clinical practice. The presentations trace age-appropriate development and aim to distinguish this from and identify “at-risk” development in toddlers and young children. A list of relevant reading is provided to underpin the presentations.

The workshops aim to teach an “observational stance” and the skill of thinking about behaviour within a conceptual framework i.e. accessing a range of possible psychoanalytic and developmental interpretations of the observed behaviours. They aim to develop participants’ observational skills through the presentation of their own brief observations of
parent-child or practitioner-child interactions. These clinical case examples are used to integrate theory and practice and to reflect on the feelings evoked by the observation.

Each participant will be asked to present a case example and a 10-minute observation sequence, to be thought about in an informal way in the workshops facilitated by the workshop leader. The case should include some background information about the child such as family composition, professional’s contact with the child, presenting problems and an observation sequence including some detail about the play or interaction. The case presented could be a child causing concern to the parent or professional.

Confidentiality and Ethics

All the material discussed during the presentations and workshops pertaining to individual cases needs to be treated as confidential. Where necessary permission needs to be obtained from parents of children to be observed. Confidentiality is paramount and personal names and identifying details should not appear on observations. The presenter could give the child a pseudonym or use the child’s initial (and easy rule is to use “C” for the child, “M” for mother and “F” for father). All participants will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement in accordance with AFC guidelines.

Learning Outcomes

Through discussion of theoretical and practical material participants should:
- examine professional, cultural and personal criteria for evaluation of ‘normal’ and ‘de-railed’ development in toddlerhood and young children;
- enhance skills in assessing ‘risk’ in the toddler-parent relationship and the family;
- learn about the ‘observational stance’ and how to think about behaviours within a conceptual framework;
- reflect on the professional use of self in work with parents and young children;
- learn about how to set up and run a parent-toddler group based on the AFC approach.

Teaching

The teaching is delivered in presentations and workshops. The teaching formats are structured for participants to learn about toddler development and mental health and enhance their skills as practitioners working with toddlers and their parents.

- teaching is provided by staff who are involved in clinical practice and research projects and can thus bridge these fields.
- theoretical concepts are examined in terms of their application in clinical practice, and clinical practice is used to inform conceptualisation and the refinement of theory.

Learning
The course is structured to provide learning experience through direct teaching, peer discussion, and participant reflexivity in preparing and assimilating the material. It capitalises on:

- participant contributing their viewpoints to the group discussion;
- the capacity to assimilate and critically review challenging material;
- reflective processes - about both the material they are exposed to and the process of learning itself.

**Teaching staff**

All module teaching is delivered by Anna Freud Centre clinicians and researchers with a wide range of experience in mental health work with vulnerable populations.

- **Inge Pretorius**, Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist, Clinical Lead of the Parent Toddler Service at AFC
- **Gloria Jaramillo**, Child & Adolescent Psychodynamic Counsellor & Psychotherapist
- **Lisa Rose Akanuma**, Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist
- **Eva Crasnow**, Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist
- **Fernanda Ruiz-Tagle**, Psychologist and PhD candidate in Psychoanalytic Studies
- **Andrea Dainesi**, Psychologist and PhD candidate in Psychoanalytic Studies

**Support for participants**

**Educational:**
Support to facilitate learning is provided through:
- hand-outs to accompany the presentations
- clear discussion of clinical material in the workshops
- reference materials

**Pastoral:**
The addressing of early relationship issues invariably has personal resonance and can evoke strong feelings in both professional and participant. These issues are touched on in the seminars. If a participant feels the need for a more private space to discuss any aspects of the course they can schedule a meeting with the Course Tutor, Adeola King.

**Child Protection:**
Sometimes participants raise feelings of unease about a family or child they have observed. If we or the discussion conclude that there is a genuine course for concern, we will discuss this outside the course hours including how to escalate concerns if appropriate. The Anna Freud Centre has Child Protection Officers and these issues can be discussed in confidence in order to safeguard any child.

**Study Requirements**

**Participants are expected to:**
- attend all presentations and workshops;
• present a case example in the workshops;
• read the relevant material prior to the presentations.

Certification/professional accreditation
Participants, upon completion of the course work, will receive a certificate of recognition from the Anna Freud Centre, stating attendance at the course and successful completion.

Ongoing Support: Work-Discussion & Consultation Service
Participants interested in ongoing support with clinical work in running Parent-Toddler Groups and other clinical work are invited to sign up for Work-Discussion & Consultation Service offered by the AFC Parent-Toddler Staff Team.

Feedback
We invite all participants to complete our brief feedback questionnaire so that we can hear and respond to your views. We appreciate the time you take to do this.
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15th – 16th May 2020

MODULE PROGRAMME & READING LIST

Day 1 Friday 15th May 2020

Registration: 09:30 – 10:00

Opening: 10:00
Welcoming

Presentation 1: 10:00 – 11:30
Toddlerhood: normal development

Reading:


Break: 11:30-12:00

Workshop: 12:00-13:00
The Observational Stance

Lunch: 13:00 – 14:00
Copies of the book Parents and toddlers in groups: a psychoanalytic developmental approach by M Zaphiriou Woods & I-M Pretorius will be available for purchase

Presentation 2: 14:00 – 15:30
Difficulties in toddler development

Reading:
Fraiberg, S. Pathological defences in infancy. In E. Fraiberg (Ed.), selected writings of Selma Fraiberg (pp. 183-202). Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Break: 15:30-16:00

Workshop: 16:00 - 17:00
Setting up & Running Community-Based Parent-Toddler Groups
Day 2  Saturday 16th May 2020

Registration: 09:15-09:30

Opening

Presentation 3:  9:30 – 10:45
Peer relationships, play and transition to nursery

Reading:


Break:    10:45-11:00

Workshop: 11:00 – 12:00
Clinical discussion

Break: 12:00 – 12:15

Presentation 4: 12:15 – 13:30
The AFC’s Approach to running and evaluating Parent-Toddler Groups

Suggested Reading:

Lunch:  13:30 – 14:30

Workshop: 14:30 -15:30
Clinical discussion

Finishing Exercise: 15:30 – 16:00
One thing you will take away from today

Close: 16:00