

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE
17TH MAY, 2019
'WHY ATTACHMENT MATTERS
FROM TRAUMA TO HOPE'**



A Community of Practice

The Workshops

Deirdre McLaughlin SW and Mary Blaney SW, Trainers and Consultants.

From Adversity and Offending to Resilience and Hope, Robert's journey. 1

This workshop shares the story of Robert, who experienced significant adversity in his early years, both at home and in the community. His story is one of healing, resilience and desistance. The workshop will highlight the importance of relationship based practice in supporting those impacted by trauma and adversity.

Dr Lisa O'Reilly, Guardian Ad Litem, Social Worker and Play Therapist

Attachment Play; Enhancing Attachment Security, Connection and Emotional release. 4

Attachment Play looks at the importance of play in enhancing a child's Attachment security to their caregivers. In addition, Attachment Play increases the child-caregiver connection; supports emotional release and focuses on positive playful ways to work through challenging behaviours.

The workshop introduces participants to the nine types of attachment play. The workshop involves experiential exercises to ignite or introduce Attachment Play skills to participants.

John Gibson – Independent Child Care Consultant and Trainer

How Do You Know What You Know About Yourself and Others? Trauma, Attachment and Mentalization . 2

Mentalization is the capacity to understand ourselves and others in terms of mental states, like beliefs, wishes, desires, thoughts, emotions and feelings. The capacity to 'mentalize' grows within the attachment experience, traumatic disruption impedes mentalization. The workshop aims to be practical and give participants something useful and useable to take back to their role as carers or professionals.

Christina Enright, Child and Family Psychotherapist and Trauma Specialist and Primary School Principal, Anne McCluskey.

Becoming a Trauma-Informed School 5

Their combined experience and thinking is underpinned by the latest neuroscience and attachment-based research in helping attendees to explore the steps to becoming a trauma informed school and to consider the responses required in order to foster environments where children can flourish and learn, despite experiencing adversities and challenges in their external environments.

Dr. Maeve Hurley, MB, MRCGP 3

'Change and Transition; What helps practitioners adopt a narrative of hope and opportunity rather than crisis?'

In this workshop Maeve will define change and the process of transition. Participants will identify the common transitions that are part of their clients' lives

The Transition Curve model will be introduced and explored as a way of understanding what the thoughts and feelings of clients may be, as they move through a change. The Workshop will explore how this knowledge can be used in practice as a tool to support clients in understanding change and the opportunities it offers ... focusing on a narrative of hope despite the disruption change can bring.

Dr Lynn Connor & Dr Adrian McKinney, Consultant Clinical Psychologists.

Certified Practitioners in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy

From Trauma to Hope - DDP - Restoring Hope to Hearts That Hurt

In this workshop they will highlight the core principles of the DDP approach, describing how it can uncover hope in all of us, touching the hearts of all children, parents and professionals alike.

Further Details of Workshops can be found here: <https://iaia.ie/events/>

Meet the Keynotes



Dr Nicola Doherty is a Consultant Lead Clinical Psychologist currently based in the Western Trust area of Northern Ireland where she leads the Paediatric Psychology Service. Nicola is involved in various national and regional committees and working groups, mainly related to paediatrics, perinatal mental health and infant health and wellbeing. Since qualifying as a Clinical Psychologist in 2000, Nicola has had ongoing clinical and research interest in various areas, including, paediatric cardiology, diabetes, acquired brain injury, neurodevelopmental conditions, child development, perinatal and infant mental health. She was awarded a Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship in 2017 which allowed her to research best practice in Canada and the USA for babies born sick and/or early. Her greatest challenge and joy in life is her primary role – as a mother.

Aoife Bairéad is a qualified social worker who specializes in attachment and trauma informed work with children and families. Her post graduate training includes specialized attachment assessments such as the Infant Care Index, the Adult Attachment Interview and the School Age Assessment and is qualifying to become a CARE-Index trainer. Aoife is also trained in therapeutic approaches including Theraplay, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy and Mentalization Based Treatment. Aoife has extensive experience working with children, young people and their families who have experienced early childhood trauma, she has worked in Ireland, the US and Vietnam.

In 2018 Aoife set up Minds in Mind, a service providing assessments and therapeutic support for children and their families. Aoife works with those impacted by bereavement, parental alienation, gun and gang violence and children who are adopted, in foster care or residential care. Aoife uses evidence informed assessment and interventions to empower families to find ways to improve their children's and their family's day to day lives. This is done holistically with those caring for the children providing an individualized and family focused plan that caters to their needs and focuses on agreed goals and outcomes.

Aoife is a guest lecturer on the Masters in Social Work in University College Dublin, Independent Trainer, an Ad-Hoc Board Member of the International

Association for the Study of Attachment and sits on the Special Interest Group for Children and Families with the Irish Association of Social Workers.



Conference Theme: Promoting Attachment for Medically challenged Babies

Nicola will consider the particular needs of children and their families when the child is born sick or early. She will explore the associated possible interrupters in their attachment relationships and will provide an overview of the importance of Infant Mental Health and wellbeing especially in this group facing the adversity of being born medically fragile. Strategic work and developments in Northern Ireland will be discussed and reference will be made to various clinical scenarios where infant focused interventions to promote attachment and best outcomes have been employed. She will highlight relevant research and developments in thinking both locally and internationally as well as drawing on her recent fellowship findings.

Conference Theme: Adolescents, Attachment and Developmental Trauma; Exploring the Paths to Healthier Relationships

Adolescence is known to be a time for growth and potential as well as discord and struggle. For children who have experienced early childhood neglect and abuse this is amplified, and for many, the potential of this transition is overwhelmed by struggles in their relationships. Their physiological and psychological development pushes them towards independence and new ways of being in relationships while the trauma they have experienced has often hindered or blocked areas of their development. This developmental dissonance creates further disfunction for the child; socially, emotionally and behaviourally, and results in the myriad of difficulties and dangers that the adolescent struggles to cope with.

This presentation will consider how understanding this in a developmental context allows parents, foster carers and professionals to recognise and respond to the processes underlying difficult behaviours, and thus create an environment that feels safer and more secure for the child, allowing them to understand their own processes, repair

Meet the Keynotes

Bringing Hope and Resilience together

"The very purpose of our life is happiness, which is sustained by hope. We have no guarantee about the future, but we exist in the hope of something better. Hope means keeping going, thinking, 'I can do this.' It brings inner strength, self-confidence, the ability to do what you do honestly, truthfully and transparently." Dalai Lama

When you think of resilience, you might think of people who seem to have it all figured out. The word "resilience" may bring to mind people who are always calm when faced with adversity, who don't break a sweat when they come up against a particularly difficult challenge. Resilience is not the absence of stress or trauma—in fact, it requires stress or trauma.

This presentation aims to bring hope and resilience together. It will explore and equip participants with a new understanding of this concept, looking at it from an adult viewpoint. It is based on the theory and evidence that hope is a teachable subject and that we all can learn to promote our wellbeing and that of our children.



Marie Dunne is Registered Mental Health Nurse with 36 years' experience. She has worked in a range of settings that support individuals and families in the area of mental health. Her last role was as a mental health promotion specialist working in the health improvement department within a Health and Social Care Trust. This role involved working across all sectors including statutory, voluntary and community in the development of mental health and emotional wellbeing through education, training and partnership working. She now undertakes the latter as an Independent Trainer and Consultant.

Irish Attachment In Action (IAIA) is a professional interest and awareness raising group committed to promoting a greater awareness and understanding of attachment theory in Ireland, with the aim of creating more positive experiences of attachment for children and helping to inform health and social policy and education. We are all volunteers in doing so.

Our Vision

We are committed to supporting social policies that enhance relationships between parents and children and promoting the creation of secure attachment experiences for all members of society.

We also aim to support professionals who work with families by providing access to knowledge, training and expertise in attachment theory.

