



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



A Community of Practice

Workshop Details

Conference Workshop 1

From Adversity and Offending to Resilience and Hope, Robert's Journey. - Deidre McLaughlin and Marie Blaney

This workshop presents a video featuring the story of Robert who experienced significant adversity in his early years and later became involved in serious offending and drug use. His story is one of healing, resilience and desistance. He shares how key relationships with staff in Youth Justice and others were an integral part of his journey. This workshop highlights the importance of relationship-based practice in supporting those impacted by trauma and adversity

Deidre McLaughlin has over 20 years' experience as a Social Worker in a range of settings including Youth Justice. In 2007 she established Sign2Music, a preschool music and signing franchise which facilitates programmes supporting communication and attachment. She also works as a part time social work lecturer. She is an Independent Trainer and Co-Founder of 'Connected for Life.'

Marie Blaney has over 25 years' experience as a Social Worker in a range of settings including Youth Justice and Professional Fostering Support. She currently works as a part time Systemic Practitioner with Angelman Syndrome Support Education and Research Trust and is a Co-Founder of 'Connected for Life'.

Conference Workshop 2

How Do You Know What You Know About Yourself and Others? Trauma, Attachment and Mentalization. - John Gibson

Mentalization! Another psychology buzz word? Not so. It is such a human characteristic that we hardly notice when we are doing it. Mentalization is the capacity to understand ourselves and others in term of mental states, like beliefs, wishes, desires, thoughts, emotions and feelings. The capacity to 'mentalize' grows within the attachment experience. Secure attachment develops mentalization. Insecure attachment and the experience of traumatic disruption impede mentalization. We learn to mentalize by being mentalized. One of the ways we can help children thrive is to consciously build their capacity to 'mentalize'. This workshop uses video, limited PowerPoint presentation, and discussion to explore a useful addition to our understanding of what it means to be human. The workshop aims to be practical and give participants something useful and useable to take back to their role as carers or professionals. You might know more about mentalization than you think!

John Gibson is an independent child care consultant and trainer; MSc (Soc Wk.), MSW (CQSW) Cert Adv SW, Dip App SLT (Child Care) Cert Coaching (ILM) John represents the Residential Child Care Project, Cornell University New York. He is the lead consultant in Ireland for Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. He has trained TCI trainers in Ireland, UK, Australia and USA. He provides assistance at all organizational levels in relation to implementation of TCI. He is also lead consultant in the RCCP CARE Model of Best Practice of Residential Child Care. He provides direct consultation to high support foster placements. John graduates with a Doctorate in Public Works from Middlesex University in July 2019.

Conference Workshop 3

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

In this workshop Dr Maeve Hurley 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 behaviours that may be experienced when working with clients with different attachment behaviours will be outlined.

The group will then discuss and explore how this knowledge can be used in practice as a tool to support clients in understanding change and the opportunities it offers ... and focusing on a narrative of hope despite the disruption change can bring.

Dr Maeve Hurley, MB, MRCGP, is a former GP, founded of 'Ag Eisteacht', an Irish registered charity, in 2001. Maeve's first-hand experience in general practice of the value of recognising relationships as a core component of health outcomes led her to focus on relational health. Her vision is to enhance practitioners' capacity to be present and attuned and build responsive relationships with their patients. She has presented talks and workshops at IFCO International Conference, the Enable Ireland Conference and to the Royal College of Physicians Ireland. She also works on an annual basis with the UCC GP Registrar Scheme across their training. Ag Eisteacht is the only organisation in Ireland offering relational training and the charity has delivered training to over 2,000 frontline practitioners in Ireland to date. Last year, Ag Eisteacht's

ABLE (Adopt a relational approach, Build, Listen and Empower) training was commended in the Irish Healthcare Awards 2018.

Conference Workshop 4

Attachment Play; Enhancing Attachment Security, Connection and Emotional Release. – Dr Lisa O'Reilly

Lisa's workshop will focus on supporting participants in their understanding of attachment theory from the child's perspective. This concept will be consolidated through experiential processes where participants will be required to engage with their own inner child and to reflect on experiences. Lisa will introduce participants to the field of Attachment Play and share the endless playful ways that caregivers can increase a child's attachment security through playful engagement. The importance of attachment play will be discussed in terms of supporting children to express their emotions and to work through any issues presenting in their lives. Finally, the workshop aims to equip practitioners with age-appropriate skills to learn about children's attachment relationships.

Dr Lisa O'Reilly PhD has been practising as a Guardian Ad Litem – with The Independent Guardian Ad Litem Agency - for the past two-and-a-half-years. This role is appointed by the Court and the Guardian represents the voice of the child in childcare proceedings, and makes recommendations to the child's best interests. Lisa has over thirteen years' experience in the field of child and family social work and ten years' experience as a play therapist.

In 2008, Lisa designed a Play Skills Training Programme to support child and family social workers in their communication with children during assessments and to learn about their attachment relationships. The social workers

evaluated the efficacy of this approach in their practice with children over a six-month period and reported their practice to be more child-centred as a result and found the voice of the child received greater representation in the assessment process.

In 2015, Lisa designed the national training programme for the Child and Family Agency in 'Linking Attachment Theory to Practice' with children and families. The programme was designed to support child and family practitioners to understand attachment theory and to link it to their everyday experiences on the frontline.

Lisa has contributed to the development of the aforementioned areas through a book publication and publishing in peer-reviewed journals.

Conference Workshop 5

Becoming a Trauma-Informed School. - Ann McCluskey and Christina Enright

Children who are enduring or have endured emotional trauma, struggle to cope with a range of challenges in their world. This includes forming intimate and healthy relationships with others, regulating their physiological and emotional arousal and behaviour, as well as difficulties in processing emotional and interpersonal information accurately. In turn, environments such as schools struggle to reach and teach such children, in order to support their wellbeing and overall success in education.

Child and Family Psychotherapist and Trauma Specialist Christina Enright, and Primary School Principal, Anne McCluskey have partnered in combining their expertise to run this workshop. Their 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.

As a result of completing this workshop participants can:

- Understand why a whole school approach for helping children to recover from trauma is crucial.
- Learn why traditional behaviour management techniques are either insufficient or ineffective for traumatised children.
- Enhance their capacity to reflect on a child or young person's functioning and behaviour with greater curiosity, understanding and empathy.
- Understand and recognise the imperative of safe, supportive and attuned relationships in trauma recover

Anne McCluskey B.Ed., BSc Behavioural Sciences, M Equality Studies; Ann has more than 30 years teaching experience (gulp!) and has been a foster carer of two children for thirteen years. She has written and campaigned extensively on educational disadvantage and equality issues. She is currently Principle of Our Lady of The Wayside National School, Bluebell, Dublin.

Christina Enright BSc Psychology, Dip Family Therapy, MA Child Psychotherapy. Christina has worked for over 15 years with vulnerable children and families in a variety of settings, including schools. She has a special interest in brain development, complex trauma and attachment; in particular how the quality of relationships children and adolescents have growing up with the adults around them impacts on their global development, mental health and personality, as well as how these manifests in human behaviour across the lifespan. Christina is passionate about imparting research about neuroscience

and attachment to significant adults around children and adolescents so that they may support the child to become the most resourceful and resilient person they have the potential to be.

Conference Workshop 6

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

This workshop is delivered by Dr Lynn Connor & Dr Adrian McKinney, Consultant Clinical Psychologists. They are two of the only three (for now they hope!) Certified Practitioners in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) in Ireland.

Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) was created by Dr Dan Hughes, a Clinical Psychologist working with families whose children were fostered or adopted. Sadly, for many of these children they had experienced such a degree of adversity in their early lives, and suffered from significant developmental trauma.

Dr Hughes' therapeutic approach is based upon and brings together theories of attachment, of developmental trauma, of the neurobiological basis of trauma and of attachment and caregiving. It also draws from intersubjectivity theory and child development. It is a family-based approach and involves engaging the child alongside their caregivers.

Traumatic experiences can have a devastating effect upon children, the disruption to their fundamental sense of safety can often result in a deep lying mistrust of adults. They can come to believe that adults aren't safe and can't always be turned to for comfort and help. They are likely to develop insecure attachments and try to prevent any feelings of emotional closeness.

Since discovering the work of Dr Hughes in his 'Building the Bonds of Attachment' book, Lynn and Adrian have increasingly woven the approach into their work with children, families, professionals and organisations.

In this workshop they will highlight the core principles of the DDP approach, describing how it has uncovered hope and touched the hearts of all - children, parents and professionals alike. DDP helps children dare to hope and learn to trust.

Dr Lynn Connor & Dr Adrian McKinney are Consultant Clinical Psychologists in Children Services in providing for the Therapeutic Needs for Looked After Children. They are two of the only three (for now they hope!) Certified Practitioners in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) in Ireland.

Keynote Speakers

'Promoting attachment for medically fragile babies' – Dr Nicola Doherty

Abstract: 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.

Dr Nicola Doherty PhD DClinPsych CPsychol 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.

Adolescents, attachment and developmental trauma; exploring the paths to healthier relationships. – Aoife Bairéad

Abstract: 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 relationships and develop healthier attachment strategies as they move towards adulthood

Aoife Bairéad is a qualified social worker who specialises in attachment and trauma informed work with children and families. Her post graduate training includes specialised 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 Mentalisation Based Treatment. Aoife has been working with children, young

people and their families for seventeen years and has worked in Ireland, the US and Vietnam.

Since she began her career Aoife has been working with children experiencing mental health difficulties including infant mental health, and those who have experienced separation, loss and trauma. Aoife has extensive experience working with children, adolescents and young adults who have experienced early childhood trauma and abuse and are now in care or have been adopted.

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 individualised 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 and provides training to organisations such as the Irish Association of Social Workers, the HSE and Tusla Child and Family Agency as well as bespoke training for specialist groups, fostering agencies, youth and community programmes and services working with children with mental health, disability and complex needs. Aoife is 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.

Bringing Hope and Resilience Together; Supporting Adults – Marie Dunne

Abstract: “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. It is based on the theory and evidence that hope is a teachable subject that we all can learn to promote our wellbeing and that of our children.

Marie Dunne is a 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 specialist working in a 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 health and emotional wellbeing through education, training and partnership working. She now undertakes the latter as an Independent Trainer and Consultant.