

# Professional Training in Play Therapy and Psychotherapy

This is the first accredited programme of its kind here in Ireland to offer a comprehensive, experiential training in Play Therapy with the option to continue training so as to qualify as a Psychotherapist with a major emphasis on the practice of Play Therapy. Graduates will be ideally placed to work as therapists with children presenting with emotional difficulties that may be mild or severe in nature and to practice as humanistic counsellors/psychotherapists with clients throughout their lifetime.

Trainees can decide how far they wish to proceed in the training depending on the age group and type of clients they wish to be trained to work with:

- At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year trainees may receive a **Diploma in Play Therapy**. Successful graduates will have gained a sound understanding of the relevant principles and theories, and developed appropriate practical skills to assess the client's needs, practice safely and ethically in a variety of settings, and provide play based interventions to children and young people with developmental issues and/or mild to moderate emotional difficulties, and to engage therapeutically with carers in relation to these clients.
- At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year trainees may receive a **Diploma in Play Therapy and Psychotherapy**. Graduates at this stage will have completed the long term training requirements of the **IAPT: Irish Association for Play Therapy**, thus they will be equipped to practice play therapy within a psychotherapy framework, working with children and young people with significant difficulties and experiencing psycho-social crisis. This may include young clients with attachment disorders and complex life histories including trauma and abuse. In addition, graduates will be equipped to practice as a counsellor with adults and adolescent clients, addressing a broad range of presenting issues in relation to stress, bereavement, relationship issues, life changes etc.
- At the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year trainees may receive a **Diploma In Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapy**. They will be equipped to practice as a creative psychotherapist with adults and adolescents, utilising talk therapy and a range of creative approaches including play, art, drama, and Sandplay. Graduates may work with traumatised clients, clients with mental health issues, and with those who wish to engage in a psychotherapy process as a means of increasing their self awareness, overcoming obstacles in their journey towards emotional health, wellbeing, and maturity.

**Play therapy** is a developmentally sensitive therapeutic modality in which a trained play therapist uses the therapeutic powers of play to help children prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development. Play therapy is relationship based – the power of the therapy comes from the strength of the relationship between the Play Therapist and the child. *“Children must be approached and understood from a developmental perspective. They must not be viewed as miniature adults. Their world is one of concrete realities and their experiences are often communicated through play. Unlike adults whose natural medium of communication is verbalization, the natural medium of communication for children is play activity.* (Landreth, 1991) Play Therapists use approaches, interventions, media, and activities that are appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the client.

Play permits the child to communicate with adults nonverbally, symbolically, and in an action-oriented manner.

### **Counselling in Action ©**

This course focuses extensively on the play therapy process and the therapeutic relationship as part of the healing intervention for children, adolescents, and adults, who have experienced difficult life events or who are compromised in reaching their full potential. In addition, it takes a systemic approach, looking at the needs of young clients within their family and the broader needs of the family also. Therefore, in addition to client-centred play therapy, psychotherapy, and creative arts approaches, the Diploma in Play Therapy portion (first 2 years) includes training on the counselling skills that are essential if one is to work successfully with the child within their family. This is expanded within the third year to ensure that graduates are competent and confident counsellors with adult clients in addition to being equipped to practice play therapy with clients with significant issues. Graduates will be qualified to work therapeutically with children, adolescents and adults.

We utilise a model that incorporates the use of non-directive and focused approaches as indicated, to respond to the changing needs of the specific client as they present to us in therapy. Students will also acquire a tool-kit of therapeutic activities and interventions utilising play and the creative arts to enrich their therapy practice. Students may graduate with a Certificate in Play Therapy Skills after 1 year (20 full training days), a Diploma in Play Therapy after 2 years (an additional 22 full training days) or with a Diploma in Play Therapy and Psychotherapy after 3 years (an additional 22 full training days). To further enrich the training experience, CTC offer more general training days, open to trainees at all stages of their training programme, throughout the 3 years. These 'Open House' days are scheduled regularly (at least one per month) and give trainees the option to avail of further training opportunities, workshops, and skill building sessions, at no extra cost. Trainees are invited to attend as many of these training sessions as they wish (prior booking is necessary although there is no additional cost).

### **The Practice of Counselling and Psychotherapy in Ireland**

Counselling and psychotherapy remain self regulating professions in Ireland although moves towards statutory regulation are under way and are welcomed. Professional Psychotherapy Bodies set rigorous standards for training courses. These requirements currently include a minimum of 450 - 500 hours of tutor student contact (over a 2 – 4 year period) covering skills training, theoretical study, clinical supervision, and personal development groupwork. In addition students must attend a minimum of 100 hours of individual therapy over the duration of their training and students should be assessed individually prior to undertaking client work. Core Trainers and Clinical Supervisors must meet specified criteria. All these factors have been taken into account in the design of this course. CTC is committed to providing training of the highest professional and ethical standards. In addition to gaining a counselling/ psychotherapy qualification, graduates of this training will also be eligible for certification and accreditation as a Play Therapist with the IAPT: Irish Association for Play Therapy ([www.iapt.net](http://www.iapt.net)), as this is a recognised course of this professional body. Our training is also recognized by the Irish Association for Psychotherapy in Primary Care ([www.iappcare.com](http://www.iappcare.com)).

This training is designed for mature students who wish to engage in training in the use of creative interventions and approaches, therapeutic play, play therapy, child psychotherapy, counselling and psychotherapy. Great emphasis is put on personal development and experiential learning, skills development, supervised clinical practice, utilising action methods, active imagination, and on working in accordance with a clear theoretical framework. Core

trainers for the Play Therapy part of the course are Eileen Prendiville and Dr Sue Jennings. Core counselling and psychotherapy trainers, and clinical supervisors, also meet the required standards.

### **Direct Entry requirements**

Usual requirements for entrance are:

- Level 8 honours degree in a field of studies in the human sciences (medical, psychological, social, educational etc). Minimum level: 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Honours

### **Indirect Entry**

Applicants who are not entitled to direct entry may be considered for entry on the basis of their prior learning, that is their knowledge and skills acquired through life, work experience and study, not attested through formal certification. Such applicants will normally have extensive relevant experience with children, young people or families, and may be invited to interview to explore the available options. Some applicants may be suitably experienced and qualified to undertake the professional training, others may need to undertake preliminary training first. Completing the Playwork training does not guarantee entry to the psychotherapy course.

### **Additional requirements for entrance, direct and indirect entry, are:**

- A minimum of 2 years relevant work experience with children and/or families.
- Suitability, and aptitude, for this area of work, commitment to personal & professional development, including a willingness to engage in a self-reflective process that includes personal therapy.
- A commitment to full attendance at the course.

Psychotherapy training is demanding on students so maturity and a high level of commitment is essential.

### **Venue**

The venue for the on-site training days is in Ballymore, (near Moate) Co. Westmeath, where we have a purpose built and fully equipped and resourced training centre. Library facilities are available and a range of books, puppets, and therapy resources are stocked in our small shop.

Students complete their clinical practice in their own area.

### **Fees**

The course fee is €3600 per annum. Clinical Supervision is included in the cost of the course each year. Trainees are facilitated in making a payment plan, to suit their individual circumstances rather than being required to pay for the year in advance.

### **Year 1: Certificate in Play Therapy Skills**

This focuses on developing non directive, client-centred, play and counselling skills, a working knowledge of child development, play, relevant psychological theories and safe working practices; developing a therapeutic relationship; using therapeutic play to facilitate children in developing psychological resilience and reaching their potential (developing self confidence, self-esteem, and a strong sense of personal identity); and to intervene with clients with a range of particular needs. It has a specific focus on the personal development of the course participants to ensure development of self-awareness, growing maturity, and the development of basic counselling and listening skills. Trainees engage in a practicum to develop

observational skills, and practice facilitating creative play sessions. In this year there are five modules of three days duration and one module of five days duration.

### **Year 2: Diploma in Play Therapy**

This focuses on training participants to work as play therapists with a range of children with mild and moderate emotional problems. The focus is on training as a Client Centred Play Therapist, then on integrating non directive approaches with more focused interventions to assist clients to develop healthy coping skills. We introduce a variety of models of psychotherapy and play therapy, their origins, and their underlying personality theories and philosophies, and practice issues. This year also covers counselling skills in more depth, working with parents and carers as 'secondary clients', and involves many personal development workshops utilising creative and play media and approaches. Participants learn to use Sandplay therapy with clients of all ages; how to work with clients who present with specific emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (e.g. bereavement, parental separation) and/or disorders. Participants engage in Clinical Practice with children and their families, a proportion of which is clinically supervised by core trainers (included in course fee). There is a focus on developing skills in linking theory and practice. In this year there are a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 day modules based around weekends as far as possible.

### **Year 3: Diploma in Play Therapy and Psychotherapy**

This focuses on developing an understanding of the counselling and psychotherapy process, coupled with developing skills and a knowledge base to work with clients with more challenging issues and complex life histories. Further development of counselling skills for working with adults as primary clients includes both training and clinical practice. Supervised clinical practice continues with clients of diverse ages.

Emphasis is given to counselling and psychotherapy through the mediums of play and creative media, supported by talk therapy, for clients who present with attachment disorders and/or have experienced child abuse and/or neglect. Continuing personal development (using the creative therapies) facilitates participants to process personal issues. Input is also given regarding Jungian Sandplay Therapy and Gestalt Therapy approaches in clinical practice, as well as an insight into other relevant approaches to psychotherapy, theories of change and human development. In this year there are a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 day modules. Open House days continue at least once per month.

### **Year 4: Diploma in Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy**

This professional training in Humanistic & Integrative Psychotherapy includes options in relation to child and adolescent psychotherapy, and adult psychotherapy. It is only open to graduates of the Diploma in Play Therapy and Psychotherapy. As with the other years, this is an experiential course with emphasis on theory, developing skills, and personal development. Supervised practice, and theoretical content, relate to working on a deep level with clients of diverse ages, and with complex needs, while making extensive use of creative approaches.

### **Assessment**

- Self, peer, trainer and supervisor assessment.
- Self awareness, maturity, and ability to work with group dynamics.
- Satisfactory participation, development and demonstration of appropriate skills and competencies in relation to each module as set and assessed by module tutors.
- Completion of course requirements and assignments to acceptable standard
- Satisfactory attendance and timekeeping.

## **Personal Therapy**

Each trainee must participate in Individual Therapy Sessions, a minimum of 30 per year, with an accredited therapist, of their own choosing, scheduled at own convenience, over the duration of the course. The experience of being a client is vital to developing an understanding of the therapy process in an experiential way and facilitates the self-exploration and development of increased self-awareness that is central to the practice of therapy. The cost of these sessions is not included in the course fee and will be negotiated between the student and the therapist of their choosing.

There are also opportunities for personal development in the course itself and through experiential activities and relationships within the group. Group psychotherapy/process sessions take place during course time.

## **Clinical Practice and Supervision**

Students will begin by engaging in child observation sessions, then therapeutic play sessions, then play therapy sessions with children and adolescents, support session with parents, and counselling sessions with adults, as they progress through the training and are assessed as being ready to engage in clinical work. Clinical Supervision by core trainers, to meet professional accreditation requirements, is included in course fee. Some additional privately funded supervision is also required.

## **Course Dates**

**Year 1:** There will also be a first year group beginning in **October 2010**. The 1st module is scheduled for 22nd – 24th October 10. Possible dates for the rest of the modules are 17th – 19th Dec, 26th – 28th Feb, 26th – 30th Apr, 24th – 26th June and 16th – 18th July. Applications are now being processed.

There is a **Year 2** group starting in Sept 10. Modules are provisionally scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Sept, 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Oct, 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov, 8<sup>th</sup> Dec, 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan, 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Feb, 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Mar, 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Apr, and 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

There is a **Year 3** intake starting in Sept 10. Modules are provisionally scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Sept, 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Nov, 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> Nov, 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> Jan, 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Mar, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Apr, 1<sup>st</sup> May (or 14<sup>th</sup> Jan), 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> June, and 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> July

**Extra Dates Every Year:** Trainees can also attend as many of the Open House days (no extra cost except for occasional specialist events) as they wish each year, subject to prior booking. It is essential to attend on some of these dates.

## **Safety Provisions**

It will be necessary for participants to have a statement from the Gardaí, with details of any information held on them in the Garda Criminal Records Database, and professional insurance cover prior to undertaking direct work with children. To be eligible for professional insurance cover (details available), each participant must be a member of a professional body with a formal complaints procedure and a professional ethical framework to which the member subscribes.

## **Nature of the course**

This is an experiential, eclectic, training with theoretical, practical and skills development components. We utilise role-play, small and large group work, lectures, presentations, discussions, creative activities, etc.

## **Objectives**

- To facilitate the personal development of the trainees both through the group process and by providing other opportunities for increased self-awareness and growth in maturity.
- To develop the trainees' person-centred counselling skills, enhance the ability to develop therapeutic relationships, and become skilled in responding therapeutically to the client's play, words, and non-verbal communications.
- To develop the trainees' understanding of the principles underlying play therapy and psychotherapy and develop skills in utilising play and creative mediums including music, movement, storytelling, symbolism, metaphor, art, drama, and sand play in their work.
- To develop the trainees' ability to assess the client's therapeutic needs and provide appropriate services and/or refer onwards as appropriate.
- To equip trainees with clinical skills to engage confidently in child and adolescent psychotherapy sessions, utilising play therapy and the creative arts, and in support sessions with their adult carers.
- To equip trainees with clinical skills to engage confidently in counselling sessions with adults.
- To facilitate trainees in understanding lifespan development, psychotherapy, and relevant theoretical frameworks to enable the use of theory to inform professional practice.
- To enable each trainee to discover the integration of theoretical frameworks and practice models that works best for them as a therapist in enabling them to be authentic in their relationships with clients.
- To raise the trainees' awareness of the relevant current legal and ethical frameworks
- To facilitate trainees in developing a basic understanding of the relevant research issues and methods.

We aim to provide trainees with opportunities for personal development that will facilitate increased self-awareness, and an understanding of the process of healing through the medium of person-centred and humanistic and integrative psychotherapies utilising creative mediums. This will assist each trainee in the integration of any unresolved issues, facilitating emotional development and the attainment of greater maturity, thus preparing them to provide safety and containment in therapeutic relationships with children, adolescents, and adults. In combination with our focus on safe working practices, ethical considerations and skills development, this will contribute to providing a secure foundation for therapeutic work with clients of all ages.

We pay particular attention to working in respectful, non-intrusive ways that respect the clients' potential to direct their own healing, at their own pace, within a therapeutic environment and within the context of a therapeutic relationship with a congruent, accepting, non-judgemental, therapist. The utilisation of play and creative approaches is seen as central in activating true creativity and spontaneity – the freedom to be oneself.

Further Details and information on other courses from: Eileen Prendiville at 087 6488149, or [childrenstherapycentre@gmail.com](mailto:childrenstherapycentre@gmail.com) [www.childrenstherapycentre.ie](http://www.childrenstherapycentre.ie)