

# **‘Postgraduate Diploma in Play Therapy’ for therapists**

## **Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications**

We are now offering this fully accredited play therapy training as an advanced supplementary training for qualified therapists and psychologists who wish to achieve an academically and professionally validated award in creative psychotherapeutic work with children and adolescents. QQI is the awarding body. Our focus on play and creativity, on understanding and conceptualising the therapy process with children and young people, and clearly addressing skills necessary for working in partnership with parents makes this a unique training. Traditional psychotherapy training focuses on work with adults. This specialised course helps develop the expertise and skills necessary to work successfully, and in accordance with ethical requirements to practice within area of competence, with young clients.

‘Talking therapies’ do not meet the needs of children – the language of childhood is play. Likewise, adolescents require a developmentally appropriate approach. Child centred therapy involves the use of play therapy and creative techniques and media, taking account of the child/young person’s developmental level, dependency, and emerging needs. Child therapists must be willing and able to meet their clients and communicate with them in a way that facilitates growth and recovery, and to bring neuroscientific learning and interpersonal neurobiological concepts into the heart of developmentally appropriate clinical practice.

The **Children’s Therapy Centre (CTC)** is the longest established and foremost provider of professional play therapy training and CPD courses in Ireland and has been delivering specialised training since the 90’s. We have approved quality assurance standards with both FETAC and HETAC and are a recognised QQI training provider. We are a registered third level educational institute. We are also an Association for Play Therapy (APT) approved provider of play therapy training – the only approved provider in Ireland.

**QQI** replaced the National Qualification Authority of Ireland (NQAI), The Further Education and Training Awards Council of Ireland (FETAC), and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) in November 2012. It also took over functions of the Irish Universities Quality Board. The Postgraduate Diploma is awarded by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). The QQI course code is PG21812 (9M18874)

### **Introduction to the course**

The postgraduate diploma is a two-year part-time experiential and eclectic training with theoretical, practical and skills development components. It can be taken as a stand alone component or as part of the MA in Creative Psychotherapy (Humanistic & Integrative Modality). We utilise role-play, small and large group work, lectures, presentations, discussions, creative activities, etc. 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 play therapy, counselling and psychotherapy trainers, and clinical supervisors, all meet the required standards for professional and academic training. This course is open to qualified therapists and a range of other professionals.

**Play therapy** is a developmentally sensitive therapeutic modality in which a trained play therapist uses the therapeutic powers of play to help clients 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, adolescent or adult. *“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 facilitates nonverbal, symbolic, and action-oriented communication. The active engagement of the unconscious and the right brain is a particularly important element.

### **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, we include training on the framework and skills that are essential if one is to work successfully with young clients within this systemic context.

We utilise a model that incorporates the use of non-directive and focused approaches, as indicated, to respond to the changing needs of the individual client as they present to us in therapy. Trainees will also acquire a tool-kit of therapeutic activities and interventions utilising play and the creative arts to enrich their therapy practice. Our main focus is in the psychotherapy process however, rather than on an activity based approach.

### **Subject Strands**

The core programme is built around three subject strands:

1. Reflective Practice
2. Developing Clinical Skills
3. Theoretical Studies

Subjects in the **Play Therapy Postgraduate Diploma** are:

- Psychotherapeutic Experience: The Internal Working Model,
- Play & Expressive Arts: Theory and Practice
- Human Development including Play
- Psychotherapeutic Experience: Exploring Patterns and Relationships
- Integrative Psychotherapy and the Play Therapy Process
- Play Therapy and Counselling: Supervised Practicum
- A Comparative Analysis of Psychotherapy and Play Therapy Models
- Considering Systems and Environments in Child & Adolescent Therapy

### **Year 1:**

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 with young clients; 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 experiential learning, including engagement in play and creative activities, to facilitate an appreciation of the therapeutic powers of play and creativity in facilitating self-awareness and healing. Trainees engage in a practicum to develop observational skills, and practice facilitating creative play sessions. The focus on child observation builds a foundation for developing research skills, and the myriad of approaches to therapeutic play based interventions builds skills in assessment and programme planning. The modules are based around weekends as far as possible.

## **Year 2:**

This focuses on training participants to work as play therapists with a range of clients with emotional problems. The initial focus is on training as a Client Centred Play Therapist, then on integrating non directive approaches with more focused interventions. We introduce a variety of models of, and approaches to, play therapy. This year also covers in more depth the skills necessary to develop a systemic and professional framework to facilitate working with parents and carers in partnership and as 'secondary clients'. Personal development workshops utilising creative and play media and approaches continue. Participants learn more about a developmental approach to sandtray therapy with clients of all ages; working with clients who present with specific emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (e.g. bereavement, parental separation) and/or disorders/stressors. Participants engage in clinical practice with children, adolescents, 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 including understanding themes in play, conceptualising the therapy process with young clients, reading play as the language of the child and facilitating developmentally appropriate creative therapy sessions. In this year there are a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 day modules based around weekends as far as possible. Group supervision sessions take place between modules.

## **Personal Therapy**

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.

When participants are qualified therapists it is expected that they will have engaged in extensive personal therapy (individual and group) during their core training. This will be explored at interview. Trainees are advised to return to personal therapy during the training, particularly if unresolved material is triggered by engagement in creative activities.

As experience of personal therapy is required for the Diploma, any trainee who has not completed at least 60 individual personal therapy sessions (and 40 group hours), prior to or during the course will have to bring their total to this number at least prior to graduation. There are opportunities for personal development in the course itself through experiential activities and group workshops.

## **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 (and generally adults also!), and intake, review and support sessions with parents, as they progress through the training and are assessed as being ready to engage in clinical work. Each trainee must complete 75 supervised clinical practice sessions prior to graduation. Group supervision sessions are

provided as part of the course between modules throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Additional privately funded supervision will be required during the post course practicum and may be required during the training depending on the volume of client work undertaken.

### **Safety Provisions**

It is necessary for participants be vetted by An Garda Siochana and to be covered by professional insurance cover prior to undertaking direct work with children.

### **Professional Training Assessment Components:**

- 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.

### **The Play Therapy Award**

The QQI award, Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Play Therapy, is available to those who are registered and who successfully complete the two-year part-time programme. The Diploma is necessary for professional accreditation purposes.

### **Programme Aims of the Postgraduate Diploma in Arts in Play Therapy**

- To develop the learners' understanding of the principles underlying play therapy and psychotherapy and develop skills in utilising play and creative mediums in their work with appropriate clients throughout the lifespan.
- Provide learners with knowledge, skills and competence to initiate and manage the professional delivery of play therapy and associated counselling services and practice in compliance with a relevant professional code of ethics.
- Equip learners to demonstrate the expertise to work therapeutically with a wide range of individuals and groups within a variety of clinical, community and/or educational settings.

### **Registering for the QQI academic award: Direct Entry**

Entrants will normally:

- Have a 2.2 or higher in a relevant undergraduate (generally a level 8) degree (for example, though not exhaustively, social science, social care, psychology, nursing, community development, education, counselling, psychotherapy etc.) or equivalent
- As this is a post qualifying training for those with mental health qualifications applicants will generally have trained in a specific model of counselling or psychotherapy in a core training that included content in relation to theories of personality, principles of psychotherapy, and legal, professional and ethical issues.
- Have at least one to two years relevant professional (paid or voluntary) experience (for example, social care, helpline worker, childcare, social work, therapeutic support, education or nursing)
- Ideally applicants will have a good working knowledge of child and adolescent development and will have prior experience of working with children.

### **Registering for the QQI award: Indirect Entry**

A small number of applicants who do not have a suitable degree may be eligible for entry to the academic programme via Recognition of Prior Learning (i.e. completion of training that

was not formally accredited). Such applicants must demonstrate, and provide evidence to attest to their acquisition of suitable learning outcomes in the field of counselling and psychotherapy.

### **Processing Applications**

Applications are accepted throughout the year. We begin processing applications approx six months prior to the start of the course. The first stage in this process is a review of the application form and documents. This year interviews take place from Jan. When all places have been allocated the intake for this year will close and subsequent applications will be held for 2019.

### **Venue**

The venue for most of 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. Some modules are also delivered at alternative locations (generally therapy centres) including Limerick. Library facilities are available.

Students complete their clinical practice in their own area. Supervision groups take place in a number of locations around Ireland.

### **Fees**

The course fee is €3990 per annum. Clinical groups and group supervision (on a proportion of clinical practice hours) are included in the cost of the course each year. Trainees are facilitated in making a payment plan, to suit their individual circumstances where necessary rather than being required to pay for the year in advance although the full fee is due for each person starting on the course.

The additional fee for academic registration and certification with QQI is currently set by QQI at €200 for Level 9 awards. This is payable during 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

The course is eligible for tax relief under section 473A, Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997. Details available from Revenue (Revenue Leaflet IT 1 'Tax Credits, Rates and Reliefs' and IT 31 'Tax Relief for Tuition Fees in respect of Third Level education) or from [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).

### **Course Dates for 2018-2019**

There will be two intakes in 2018. The course runs for the full day on each date. The following dates are provisional and subject to change.

**Year 1, Group 1 (Full):** 29<sup>th</sup> June–2<sup>nd</sup> July (Limerick), 17<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> August (Westmeath), 28<sup>th</sup>–30<sup>th</sup> Sept (Limerick), 24<sup>th</sup>- 25<sup>th</sup> Nov (Westmeath), 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Feb (Limerick), 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> March (Westmeath), 18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> May (Westmeath)

**Year 1, Group 2:** 24<sup>th</sup>–27<sup>th</sup> August (Limerick), 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> October (Westmeath), 30<sup>th</sup> Nov – 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec (Limerick), 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Jan (Westmeath), 22<sup>nd</sup>–24<sup>th</sup> Feb (Westmeath) 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> April (Westmeath) 1<sup>st</sup>– 2<sup>nd</sup> June (Westmeath)

**Year 2:** 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Sept (Limerick), 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Oct, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Nov (Limerick), 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Dec, 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb, 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Mar, 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Apr, 13<sup>th</sup> Apr (Leixlip), 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> May,

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) Facebook: <http://on.fb.me/CTC-facebook>

**APT Approved Provider 11-29**