

CoramBAAF Conversations | Therapeutic interventions transcript

00:00:02 Helen Little

Hi, I'm Helen Little. I am the Training, Consultancy and Events Manager at CoramBAAF and it's my privilege this afternoon to talk to Hetty Verhagen and Heidi is one of our associate trainers. She is running our half day on therapeutic interventions on the 29th of February. I know very little about this course, so I thought it be a really lovely.

00:00:22 Helen Little

Idea to chat to Hetty and share my conversation with you to learn a little bit more about it and what sort about and why we should join. But to start off with Hetty, would you mind talking about yourself?

00:00:34 Hetty Verhagen

Thank you, Helen. Yes, my name is Hetty, short for

00:00:36 Hetty Verhagen

Hedwig, I am a therapeutic social worker and I've spent my whole social work career in adoption, fostering kinship care services. I am, at the moment a social lecturer at the University of Leeds, and I'm also an independent.

00:00:57 Hetty Verhagen

Therapeutic social worker. So I I do therapeutic interventions with, with children and and their families.

00:01:04 Hetty Verhagen

I also managed was practise manager at an adoption support centre and I've worked with a A multidisciplinary team for people delivering all sorts of therapeutic interventions. All of that is really helpful when when we run this.

00:01:20 Helen Little

Course. Lovely. Thank you. Hetty. It's brilliant. That's just, you know, gives us a broad.

00:01:24 Helen Little

Outlook of what? You know what what you've done in your experience, which obviously makes you really highly qualified for delivering this.

00:01:30 Helen Little

So tell us a little bit about how this course.

00:01:32 Hetty Verhagen

Came about. Yes. Well, this course I I was asked to write this course because Coram Bath was having quite a lot of inquiries from social workers. Who?

00:01:46 Hetty Verhagen

Who, as part of their role, had to recommend therapeutic interventions for children and young people.

00:01:52 Hetty Verhagen

And their family.

00:01:54 Hetty Verhagen

With the you know, with the adoption support funds coming to be, that has become a really big part of lots of people working in adoption support services, but also social workers working in fostering teams and working with kinship families. They're often asked to make recommendations or to make applications.

00:02:15 Hetty Verhagen

Funding and to to kind of build a case of why this particular intervention might work for for this particular family and and the things that they are dealing with.

00:02:28 Hetty Verhagen

And and that can be a really tricky task. You know, there's so many different interventions out there and you can't be an expert in all of them. You can't be trained in all of them. So people were often asking for and bath, you know, is there anything you can write? Is there anything you can do? You have any training? And I started thinking about that.

00:02:48 Hetty Verhagen

And so ohh, I think I can put that training together and have to say it was, you know, doing the research.

00:02:55 Hetty Verhagen

Or it's, which is so interesting because I I started from what I knew, and then I found out lots more and really quite surprising things that I've had an impact on my own practise as well. So yeah, that process was was, you know, the ball was sent rolling by our Korean bath members.

00:03:15 Hetty Verhagen

But I really appreciated being set that challenge.

00:03:18 Helen Little

Lovely. So who? You you've you've alluded to, but who specifically should join this course? Who is?

00:03:23 Helen Little

It relevant to.

00:03:24 Hetty Verhagen

So when we.

00:03:26 Hetty Verhagen

Talked about this course and what we wanted it to be, what we had in.

00:03:29 Hetty Verhagen

And was those people who would ring the advice line, or who would ring in people who would come to practise forums and and other training events?

00:03:37 Hetty Verhagen

So, so mostly social workers, team managers.

00:03:43 Hetty Verhagen

People working adoption, fostering kinship care services, but then actually we've also had a number of foster carers on the on the course who who said.

00:03:53 Hetty Verhagen

Actually, when we discuss interventions, I want to understand what people are talking about. And you know, sometimes I have an opinion where something might work or why it might not work. And it'd be really helpful to have some kind of evidence base behind my, you know, my opinions. We've also had people from schools who just really wants to know.

00:04:14 Hetty Verhagen

What what kind of interventions were out there? Perhaps they were making recommendations. Perhaps they were having conversations with with families. Perhaps they were commissioning services themselves with with pupil premium premium plus.

00:04:31 Hetty Verhagen

And and we've had adoptive parents. We've also interestingly, had quite a few therapeutic providers. So people who are on the other side, you know, we thought.

00:04:43 Hetty Verhagen

About often this support for people who who make decisions on recommendations, but people who are delivering this support.

00:04:51 Hetty Verhagen

We're saying actually, it's really interesting for.

00:04:54 Hetty Verhagen

To hear what people who are commissioning, what they are thinking about, you know what before it comes to us, what what are the the thought processes? Why have they come to me and not?

00:05:04 Hetty Verhagen

To somebody else.

00:05:05 Helen Little

That sounds like it's sounds like a a wide range of people that would find it really interesting, isn't it? So what do you think stops people from coming on?

00:05:13 Helen Little

From from doing this.

00:05:13 Hetty Verhagen

Ohh, that's an interesting question, Helen, because we might not necessarily see the people.

00:05:21 Hetty Verhagen

Who, who do not want to come on the course? We've had people on the course who said, you know, I'm really experienced. I've been doing this for years.

00:05:31 Hetty Verhagen

I just want to kind of brush up. I wasn't quite sure whether this was the right course. I think maybe if people are very experienced or are very familiar with with quite a few therapeutic interventions, it might feel like actually I I know what works for me. I know what works for my families, but one of the things that we talk about on the course.

00:05:51 Hetty Verhagen

Is that?

00:05:54 Hetty Verhagen

I think I used this quote.

00:05:57 Hetty Verhagen

You know to.

00:06:00 Hetty Verhagen

To a man with a hammer, everything else looks like a nail. If you know you only think of the solutions that you know of.

00:06:08 Hetty Verhagen

So the kind of the the broader you're thinking can be about therapeutic interventions and and and possible things that might help families. The more you know the why do you think it is?

00:06:20 Hetty Verhagen

I've actually experienced that myself as I've I've I'm training quite a few different approaches and there's always this period like this kind of honeymoon period when you you've just trained in a new approach and you think ohh this can help everybody. You know, every family, every child, every young person, every human being that I can think of would benefit from this approach.

00:06:41 Hetty Verhagen

And then you kind of have to bring yourself back down to Earth and think well it.

00:06:45 Hetty Verhagen

It it it's.

00:06:46 Hetty Verhagen

It's worth introducing this to to these people that for other people other approaches are helpful and I think maybe sometimes that stops people as well that, you know, they've they just absolutely love Sarah play for example or they've seen.

00:07:01 Hetty Verhagen

Such fantastic such fantastic results with DDP or sensory processing interventions, and because they've seen families being helped so much by by one particular or, you know, a small number of interventions, it might feel like I'm going to recommend that to every.

00:07:20 Hetty Verhagen

See, but then sometimes it's it's worse kind of passing in at a little.

00:07:24 Hetty Verhagen

Bit wider, yeah.

00:07:25 Helen Little

OK, that's really help. Listen, I think you're right. I think yes, when you've got a new something you can wanna go and and convert the world, don't you? And use it all over and you can't see anything else. So it's like, OK, fair enough. How do you want? Just give us a bit of a an overview. Don't give too much away of what's.

00:07:40 Helen Little

Of what the course is going to look like, I don't wanna spoil it the fun, but you know, it might just be helpful just to sort of get a bit of a feel for.

00:07:48 Hetty Verhagen

No spoilers.

00:07:49 Helen Little

No spoilers now.

00:07:52 Hetty Verhagen

It's so we look at a number of of of approaches. We look at many of the approaches that are within the scope of the adoption Support fund because we we realise a lot of people will be will be.

00:08:08 Hetty Verhagen

Working within those criteria.

00:08:12 Hetty Verhagen

And for all of those approaches, we kind of look at where does it come from? What does it look like? What are some of the activities that you might do? What are some of the considerations, like who might really benefit from it and who may really struggle with this?

00:08:30 Hetty Verhagen

It's it's meant to be very interactive as well, so you know, we share experiences. You know there may be people who are trained in a certain approach or they may have used an approach with with families before. So we we there's lots of opportunities for kind of networking and sharing as well.

00:08:49 Hetty Verhagen

We look at outcomes, you know, how do you measure outcomes? How do people experience having therapeutic interventions? We look at some statistics of that.

00:09:01 Hetty Verhagen

And then we look at this really interesting body of research about the common factors of effective therapeutic intervention.

00:09:12 Hetty Verhagen

And there are some really surprising outcomes in in that research. It's going to be a cliffhanger.

00:09:15 Helen Little

Don't give it away.

00:09:19 Hetty Verhagen

Now isn't it?

00:09:21 Hetty Verhagen

So even though we look at all the different approaches, we also look at what are, what are the common factors. And I think the really exciting bit about that is.

00:09:31 Hetty Verhagen

That when we look at the common fact.

00:09:32 Hetty Verhagen

That is what becomes really clear is the important role that the the family social worker plays in therapeutic interventions. So I know from from other things that I've done with core and bath that it can sometimes feel for social workers, as if their role is to just.

00:09:53 Hetty Verhagen

The application and then the the therapeutic practitioner gets to do all the direct work.

00:09:59 Hetty Verhagen

And all the interesting stuff.

00:10:01 Hetty Verhagen

And for lots of social workers, that's a bit of a loss. That's, you know, oh, there's this other person. I was doing this work that I'd be, I'd love to be.

00:10:08 Hetty Verhagen

I mean, but when we look at the common factors, what becomes very clear is the the benefit of the very active role of the family social worker. So I feel that by the end of our half day, we've kind of reclaimed a lot of of that kind of core social work.

00:10:28 Hetty Verhagen

Skill. You know the the, the core social worker role that that, that people need to play.

00:10:33 Helen Little

I'm gonna sign up because I think it sounds really interesting, but no, I think I think it's. But it's really interesting to sort of that broad view that sort of.

00:10:41 Helen Little

Of of lots of different interventions and therefore, and what some of the key factors are, that sounds really interesting, I think and probably really accessible to people who are social workers who could not necessarily specialists. But you know, they could have at least an understanding of what's, you know what what each are and therefore what they, what they recommend, what being asked to take part in so.

00:11:01 Helen Little

And I'm interested in what some of the reactions, what some of the feedback is from people that you've had that have done your calls.

00:11:07 Hetty Verhagen

Just to share that and I think some some severely interested feedback from social workers has been they may have started out.

00:11:15 Hetty Verhagen

At the beginning of the day, saying the beginning of the morning saying no, I I want to know more. I don't know enough when we're talking about these things. I don't feel very confident. I feel like I'm saying the wrong thing or I feel like I'm.

00:11:30 Hetty Verhagen

Kind of winging it a bit.

00:11:32 Hetty Verhagen

And often at the end people say ohh, I feel more confident now and actually I also realise how much of everything that I do know. You know, just from my my, my social work knowledge, how beneficial that is in having this conversation.

00:11:49 Hetty Verhagen

So I think that's that's really nice to hear. And then from if parents, foster carers, kinship carers when they attend, I really love hearing the feedback that.

00:12:01 Hetty Verhagen

I I actually understand now the role that I play in it and what to expect from it often, particularly if this is your first time in in supporting a child or a young person in a therapeutic intervention, you can feel a little bit.

00:12:17 Hetty Verhagen

You feel like you've lost a little bit of your power because there's somebody else now who's going to do that, that work, who's going to help the child.

00:12:23 Hetty Verhagen

That you care so much about.

00:12:25 Hetty Verhagen

But after you know doing the course, people realise that you know they have such an important role to play in that whole process.

00:12:35 Helen Little

Petty. That's wonderful. Thank you ever so much, I think, did a great job there of, of explaining what it's you know, what the courses aims are and where it's come from and who it's who it's suitable for and who's gonna benefit from it. It just sounds really interesting. So thank you. I have a much better understanding now of of of the course.

00:12:50 Helen Little

Itself, and that just means lots of people now to sign up on the 29th of the month of February for the morning, and I'll be going talking everybody else about it. So thanks ever so much. Please speak. Thank you.

00:12:58 Hetty Verhagen

Ohh, fantastic.

00:13:01 Hetty Verhagen

You're very welcome. Bye bye.