



DEEP MIND
PSYCHODYNAMIC TRAINING

PSYCHODYNAMIC PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH CHILDREN,
ADOLESCENTS, AND FAMILIES: SYSTEMIC
INTERVENTIONS FOR RELATIONAL SUCCESS

FACILITATED BY

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WHAT YOU WILL LEARN TODAY?

- How early attachment patterns shape behaviour, defences, and emotional regulation in children and adolescents
- How the **right brain is wired from conception through the first two years of life**, laying the foundation for affect regulation, relational safety, and unconscious emotional processing
- How to move from surface behaviours to deeper **developmental and relational formulations**
- How to assess children and families through a psychodynamic, systemic, and attachment-informed lens.
- **Experiential focus:** You will *feel* how right-brain attunement, regulation, and relational presence create safety and meaning — not just understand it conceptually

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

PART 1

Children – Developmental & Relational Foundations 🧸 🧠

- Right-brain development (conception–age 2) as the foundation of attachment and regulation
- Behaviour, play, and affect as relational communication within the family system
- Unconscious defences shaping symptoms and early personality patterns

PART 2

Adolescents – Attachment, Identity & Protection 🌱 🧠

- Neurodevelopmental change and reactivated attachment dynamics
- Resistance and withdrawal as protective strategies during identity formation
- Social media, AI, and peer worlds as powerful relational environments

WHY A DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHODYNAMIC LENS?

- Children unconsciously communicate through behaviour, play, affect, and body states
- Working beneath behaviour, what is not known
- Understanding development in context of parent's history and culture
- Symptoms are developmental signals, not diagnoses alone
- Families are the relational ecosystem of the child
- Depth work supports regulation, meaning, and change

ATTACHMENT AS THE ORGANISING PRINCIPLE

- Early attachment shapes:
 - Emotional regulation
 - Defensive patterns
 - Relational expectations
- Attachment patterns are visible **very early**
- Children show attachment through:
 - Play
 - Affect
 - Behaviour
 - Relationship to the therapist- Take the Quiz: <https://deepmindpt.com/attachment-quiz>





DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAYS OF DEFENCE

- Defences develop to protect immature nervous systems. Impact of “early” separations in the 0-2 age range.
- What looks “oppositional” is often protective
- Defences evolve with age and relational safety

Key idea:

👉 *Children defend differently at different developmental stages.*

- *0-2 Infancy*
- *2-5 Pre-school*
- *5-11/12 Latency*
- *12-25 Early, Middle and Late Adolescence*

FROM BEHAVIOUR TO MEANING

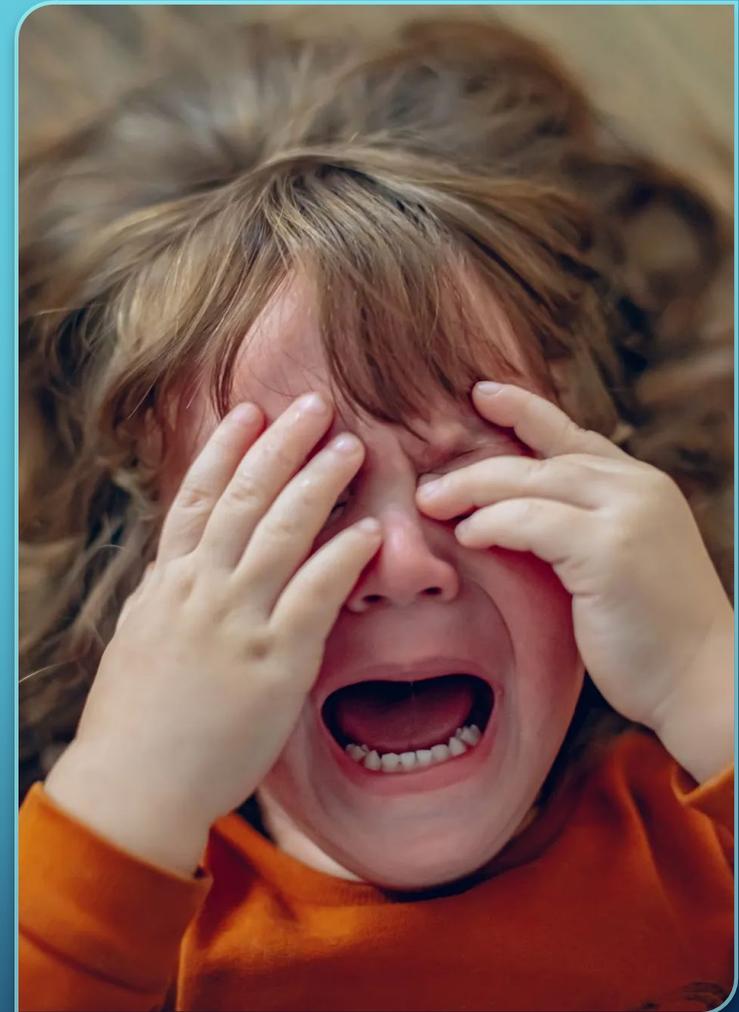
Instead of asking:

✗ “How do we stop this behaviour?”

We ask:

- ✓ “What developmental task is being interrupted?”
- ✓ “What is this child protecting against?”
- ✓ “Who is holding the emotional load in this system?”

Always obtain a thorough developmental history (Resources)



RIGHT BRAIN PSYCHOTHERAPY (CHILD-FOCUSED)

- Early experience is stored implicitly, what does this mean?
- Regulation is learned relationally through an attachment figure that is regulated = co-regulation.
- Tone, rhythm, posture, play, and affect matter more than words
- Children change through **felt safety**, not explanation – shift from “left brain” to “right brain”

Aligned with Schore, A Seigel, D & Bolte Taylor, J (see References)

THE CHILD PSYCHO-SOCIAL INTERVIEW (SYSTEMIC FRAME)

Assessment focuses on:

- Developmental history – start with conception
- Attachment relationships
- Family emotional history (both parents)
and external climate
- Stressors, losses, transitions
- Child's adaptive strategies – strengths and weaknesses

👉 *We assess the system, not just the symptom.*



MAKING SENSE OF PRESENTING BEHAVIOURS - FORMULATIONS

Common presentations:

- Anxiety, inattention, hyperactivity
- Aggression, anti-social behaviour
- Learning Difficulties
- Withdrawal, isolation, depression
- Regression
- Neurodiversity, ASD
- School refusal
- Addiction, social media, gaming, alcohol, drugs, porn, etc.



Reframed as:

- Nervous system responses
- Attachment signals – anxious, avoidant, disorganized.
- Developmental communications, family systems failures



TRANSLATING FORMULATION FOR PARENTS

Parents need:

- Clarity, not jargon
- Containment, not blame
- Meaning, not diagnosis

Effective feedback/sharing thoughts:

- Links behaviour to development
- Normalises stress responses
- Invites parents into regulation and insight development
- Only 10% are interested to focus on themselves



CASE ILLUSTRATION - L.G

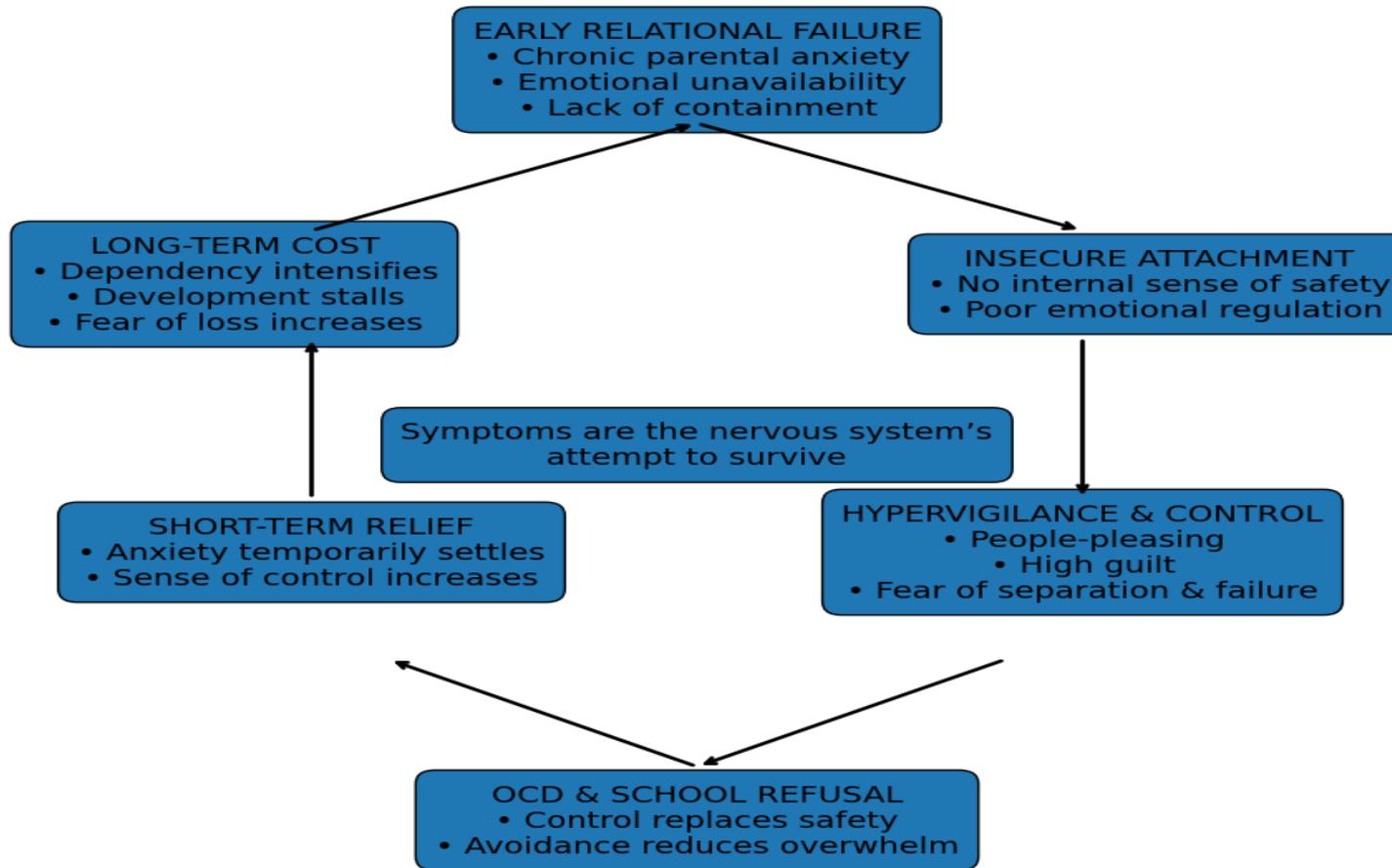
- Child's presenting behaviour - 1.5 years – 27 years
- Attachment pattern
- Defence strategy
- Family dynamics
- Developmental meaning

👉 *What changes when parents understand the “why”?*

Key Clinical Message

When parents cannot provide containment or engage in reflective change, symptoms become the child's only adaptive solution

When Emotional Safety Is Missing, Control Becomes the Solution



WORKING EXPERIENTIALLY

Learning is integrated through:

- Role play
- Symbol work
- Art and play-based reflection
- Embodied demonstrations

👉 *Children process symbolically — so must we*

ADOLESCENCE: A DEVELOPMENTAL REORGANISATION



Why this stage feels “harder”

- Adolescence involves rapid neurobiological, emotional, and relational change
- The limbic system matures before regulatory frontal systems
- Identity, autonomy, and belonging become central tasks
- Heightened sensitivity to shame, rejection, and power dynamics

👉 *Adolescent behaviour reflects a nervous system under construction.*

COMMON ADOLESCENT PRESENTATIONS

From “problem behaviour” to developmental meaning

- Withdrawal → protection of emerging identity
- Defiance → negotiation of autonomy
- Risk-taking → sensation-seeking in an immature regulatory system
- Emotional volatility → heightened limbic activation
- Silence or disengagement → fear of exposure or shame

👉 *What looks oppositional often signals vulnerability.*

👉 Reflective Exercise: Connecting with your “Inner Adolescent” -

THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH ADOLESCENTS

Engagement before interpretation

- Adolescents test authenticity and emotional safety
- Authority is often experienced as threat
- Respect, transparency, and pacing are critical - take more time
- The therapist's regulation models what words cannot

Clinical stance:

- Curious, not confrontational
- Collaborative, not corrective
- Attuned to power, shame, and autonomy

👉 *The relationship is the intervention.*

AI, ADOLESCENTS & THE INNER WORLD

Containment, comfort, and the illusion of safety

- AI offers immediate availability without emotional demand
- Can function as a **pseudo-attachment figure**
- Provides soothing, advice, and mirroring without relational risk
- May reduce opportunities for frustration, repair, and mutuality

Clinical reflections:

👉 *AI meets unmet relational needs — but without the developmental work of being known by “another” – impairs mentalisation.*

👉 *Social media intensifies attachment needs at a stage when identity is most fragile.*

“..it does not bring with it that spark of human connection that stimulates our brain in a positive way” - J B Taylor

THERAPIST POSITIONING

A developmental, relational approach

- Approach digital use with **curiosity, not correction**
- Assume technology meets a **relational or regulatory need**
- Avoid shaming, minimising, or catastrophising digital engagement
- Understand online behaviour as an extension of attachment strategies and seek to become an alternative attachment figure in their world.
- Provide alternatives

👉 *Digital behaviour is communication.*





INTEGRATION & REFLECTION

- A developmental lens for behaviour
- A systemic way to formulate
- Language to support parents and enhance their self-awareness
- Practical tools to apply immediately

👉 *Depth, when done developmentally, creates safety, not complexity.*



DEEP MIND PSYCHODYNAMIC TRAINING - 2026

Deep Mind Transformation Method – 4 week introductory course: Free Webinar 23/6/26.

Course Commences: 2/7/26 APS CPD Approved 11 Hours

<https://deepmindpt.com/waitlist-page>



CPD Approved
2024-25 11 CPD hours

E: info@deepmindpt.com www.deepmindpt.com/

DEEP MIND PSYCHODYNAMIC TRAINING - 2026



Deep Mind Mastery Journey – 8 week Advanced Training

<https://psychology.org.au/event/25758> Starts – 25/2/26



APS CPD Approved

**2026-27
20 Hours**

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