

# Continuing Professional Development



## Kieran McCrystal

Kieran started his career as a counsellor working in palliative care and bereavement. He went on to forge much experience working with drug and alcohol services. He has provided counselling, group work and consultancy for the Armed Forces.

Kieran established a private practice from his home in North London in 2003 and works as a freelance supervisor, trainer and group facilitator.

Kieran is a primary tutor on the Person Centred BA Hons and the Humanistic BSc. Kieran holds a BA (Hons) in Counselling, He has recently returned to training, doing an MSc in Integrative Psychotherapy

## Parental Alienation

Parental Alienation affects children and families. Children who get enlisted in the alienation of one parent are often left with complex needs, which might be described as a displacement of responsibility. This can lead to a sense of unresolved feelings that stay into adult life and impact on decision making and trust in relationships.

Historically parental alienation has been poorly understood, as evidenced by the lack of sound legislation in family law. It has recently become more recognised and counsellors and psychotherapists are being used more and more to support children and families in parental alienation

Aims of the course are to identify and recognise:

- Signs of Parental Alienation, (alienation in the child) looking at mild to moderate and severe
- The impact on the child and the targeted parent
- The underlying influences and where professionals unknowingly collude and get it wrong

“Parental alienation is not just a single crime towards the other parent but three crimes against the child...

The first crime is that the alienating parent doesn't acknowledge that every child is one half of each parent. Every time the alienating parent tells the child how horrible the other parent is, the alienating parent is telling the child that half of him or her is horrible..

The second crime is that the alienating parent teaches the child that cutting off contact with people is an acceptable way to handle anger, hurt and disappointment... The child will grow up without the appropriate coping skills to have normal, healthy relationships with other adults..

The third crime is that one day the child will look back on the alienating parent's behaviour from an adult perspective. He or she will then realize that the alienating parent robbed the child of something very precious – the love and attention of the other parent. The child-turned -adult will realize that the trust placed in the alienating parent was misplaced. He or she will feel betrayed. At that point the adult will not just have one damaged relationship with a parent, but damaged relationships with both parents...

The third crime is the worst of all” .....Jeffries-Davis, A Families Heartbreak, A Parent's Introduction to Parental Alienation. 2008. A Families Heartbreak LLC

**TARGET GROUPS:** Participants from all modalities are welcome.

**Tuesday 5th and Wednesday 6th May 2020**

**Time: 9:30am —5:30pm**

**Venue: Metanoia Institute, 13 North Common Road, Ealing W5 2QB**

**Metanoia Members: £140**

**Non-Members: £180**

**Complete our CPD Booking Request Form and return to [CPD@metanoia.ac.uk](mailto:CPD@metanoia.ac.uk)**



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## This workshop will cover some of the following MHFP Learning Outcomes

### **Knowledge of and ability to work with a social responsibility framework**

The first learning outcome revolves around psychotherapists being required to have a grasp of the historical and cultural influences on societal understanding of, and attitudes to, mental health and illness and to develop a capacity to work reflexively within a social responsibility framework. To gain this learning outcome you should have knowledge and experience of:

- Historical and cultural models of mental health, illness and care. **The training will look at the history of family law and how this has exacerbated the pain and confusion arising from parental alienation. Particularly where it has unwittingly been blind to certain aspects of the 'Obsessed Parent'.**
- The impact on mental health service users and their families of diagnosis, stigma, normativity and minority experience. **The training will focus on the impact of parental alienation on the children's and the targeted parent's mental health.**

The influence of socio-economics, class, gender, disability, age, culture, religion, race and sexuality on the incidence, definition, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness and mental health. **There will be space to consider a critique of parental alienation in light of the potential gender biases which appear to be present in family law**

### **Knowledge of and the ability to work within a wider system of care.**

Psychotherapists will also require sensitivity and awareness that equips them to work alongside other mental health services in the field. Learning in this area should enable you to:

- Be able to recognise clients with more complex, significant, enduring or exceptional needs; **The training will focus on the lasting impact on the child and targeted parent. It will also look at the attachment challenges and the alienating parent.**
- Know how and when to refer on to appropriate professional agencies; **There will be case studies within the training outlining how best to work alongside support services with the family law system**
- Understand how to offer, when necessary, psychotherapy as part of an appropriate package of care. **The training will look at best practice and the cautions attached to therapy and parental alienation**

Understand the different professional and personal roles in care for people with complex or enduring needs.

**The training will focus on where untrained professionals in parental alienation make errors of judgement which can have damaging effects on family relationships**

### **Knowledge and awareness of diagnosis and treatment in the context of UK mental health care services**

Psychotherapists will need to gain an appreciation of how other mental health services in the field operate so that they are equipped to work alongside them, if their client work necessitates this. Learning in this area should give you an understanding of the following:

Diagnosis and classification of mental illness within the medical model including a working knowledge of the DSM V and a capacity to evaluate its use as a system of assessment.

- **The training will consider the new classification within DSM V, Shared Psychotic Disorder or Shared Delusion which describes a severe form of parental alienation where the child has begun to believe the delusions of the alienating parent as reality.**
- The types of interventions and treatments used, their rationale and side effects. **The training will focus on developing ways to understand the underlying needs and losses of the child or adult/child in the therapy room**

Understanding and appreciation of different professional and personal roles in mental health care.

**There will be space to explore the roles of counsellors/psychotherapists, social services, Cafcass and schools and how these often unwittingly offer confused diagnosis and treatment plans.**

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## This workshop will cover some of the following MHFP Learning Outcomes

### **A knowledge and appreciation of different models of assessment, including a medical model.**

The final learning outcome relates to psychotherapists gaining an understanding of, but not restricted to the medical model of assessment. This should include:

- Assessment tools and approaches. **The training will focus on developing clear assessment tools to discern between parental alienation and estrangement/rejection. This will include reference to new diagnosis within DSM V as stated above**
- Safeguarding, **The focus of the training in identifying parental alienation will help the practitioner better evaluate the authentic needs of the child or adult/child. This is a significant point in the training as safeguarding of the child's vulnerability often gets eclipsed by the multitude of accusations aimed at the targeted parent.**
- Recognising complex and enduring mental illness. **The training will explore the complex needs of the obsessed parent, focussing on what the literature describes as a prevalence of personality disorders such as borderline and anti-social personality disorders.**