

Course Guide

Postgraduate Diploma in Children and Young People's Psychological Trainings: Therapy: Autism Spectrum Conditions and Learning Disabilities Pathway (ASC/LD)

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Introduction

This postgraduate diploma in the Autism Spectrum Conditions and Learning Disabilities (ASC/LD) pathway is a one-year full-time course with a salaried position. You will work in a clinical setting providing mental health support for children and young people, alongside attending teaching with Anna Freud and University College London (UCL). Funding is provided by NHS England as part of the NHS Long Term Plan.

Our ASC/LD modality will provide you with an opportunity to gain understanding, expertise, and a broad range of skills and practical strategies required to meet the needs of children and young people who are autistic and/or have a Learning Disability. This modality is best suited to candidates who already have experience in mental health interventions and are interested in learning how to adapt their existing skills to the CYP ASC/LD population.

What will I study?

Teaching on the ASC/LD modality will explore:

- Core knowledge of presentation and development of children and young people with a diagnosis of ASC and/or LD.
- Awareness and understanding of neuro-developmental and mental health conditions commonly co-occurring with Autism and/or Learning Disability (LD).
- Relevant legislation, theory and best practice that inform approaches to working with Autistic children and young people and/or have a LD.
- Training on adapting and delivering evidence-based interventions for co-occurring mental health conditions, (such as anxiety and depression) and to improve well-being.
- Neuro-affirmative approaches to assessment, case conceptualisation/formulation and intervention
- Strategies to adjust environments (home, school, community) to support children and young people's wellbeing
- Teaching on Core Skills (a module which runs alongside Autism/LD modules) such as developing therapeutic alliance, general developmental psychopathology, reflective and inclusive practice, and broad assessment and formulation skills.

Please note, the course draws on integrated models and approaches. Whilst drawing on behavioural and systemic approaches, this course does not focus solely on adapted CBT, and this follows best practice and National Curriculums to guide this structure. As a higher intensity programme, the course also aims to build on existing clinical skill sets of trainees and therefore some baseline knowledge of mental health intervention is required.

The course recognises the heterogeneity of strengths, needs and differences in the Autistic and Learning Disability communities. The curriculum focuses the main assessment and treatment approaches recommended by published evidenced-based literature and NICE guidelines, but is also informed by lived experiences and the neurodivergent community.

Learning with us

Teaching will be delivered through a combination of online and face to-face contact:

- Didactic teaching to ensure baseline knowledge in particular areas: Core skills working therapeutically with children and young people, neuro-affirmative adaptations to assessment and interventions.
- Large and small group discussions: Personal-professional exploration, reflective discussion and skills-development will take place in small groups with plenary sessions to consolidate learning.
- Extensive use of case discussion and role-play: Allows trainees to examine their own existing skills and practices in an experimental way.

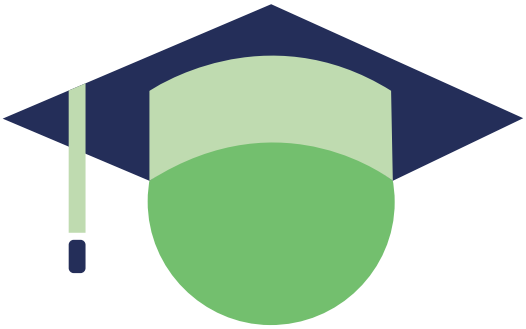
Across all modules the focus is around clinical practice implementation of theory and skills. Students will be supported through both academic content and their employment to frame mental health assessment with a neuro-affirmative approach and further develop and adapt psychological therapies with children and young people with a diagnosis of Autism and/or Learning Disability. An integral part of the training is a requirement to video-record your clinical work and to reflect on your practice in small, facilitated practice tutor groups.

What are the course requirements during the training year?

Students will be assessed through a variety of methods such as written case reports, verbal case presentations, a clinical portfolio, and video recordings of your practice with written reflections based on these.

Over the course of the one-year training, you would be expected to see a minimum of nine cases (which will be a combination of assessment and intervention based work as the focus). You will need to evidence at least 80 hours of clinical work. Cases must have a diagnosis of Autism and/or Learning Disability.

Part of the work may also include intervention delivered via parent/carer or broader systems (e.g. school).



How does the employment work?

To apply for the training, you will first need to secure a job offer with a participating CYP Mental Health Service that have secured funding with NHSE. These include NHS CAMHS, Third Sector and Local Authority services. Services typically advertise for roles during July – October each year to start the following January.

During the course, you will be based at your employing service for 2-3 days a week during term time and full-time during the course holidays.

In your employing site and clinical work, you will be expected to develop your skills and demonstrate practical application of skills learnt through the course. You will have a supervisor in your employing service who will support you in finding suitable cases for your academic assessments, guiding clinical practice and interventions, managing risk and monitoring outcomes.

Your site supervisor will provide 1 hour a week individual supervision (or a longer group supervision) to support your clinical skills development.

Students feedback that working clinically alongside learning is one of the most helpful components of the course, which makes it stand out from other trainings and promotes professional growth.

Please see our FAQs for more information on the application process.



Suitability for the course

This modality is best suited to candidates who already have experience in mental health interventions and are interested in learning how to adapt their existing skills to the CYP ASC/LD population. Candidates interested in applying for the ASC/LD training would ideally have:

- a minimum second-class Bachelor's Degree or equivalent standard in a relevant subject (e.g. psychology, social work etc),
- two or more years working within a CYP Mental Health Setting
- one year or more of clinical competence and experience working with Autistic and/or LD individuals.
- a keen interest in working with and specialising in interventions for the CYP Autistic and LD population
- previous experience of delivering mental health interventions.

Applicants who do not fulfil the academic criteria but have relevant professional experience are still encouraged to apply and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.



Further Information

For further enquiries on the training, please contact our course administration team at cypttherapy@annafreud.org

www.annafreud.org
www.ucl.ac.uk

Please be aware that information in this brochure is correct at time of publication and may be subject to change.