



Invitation + Deep Water Warning!

Please read before you commit to the training

You may have seen this sign before? It is often seen by deep waters in a harbour. You need to know - this training goes deeper than most. If you think about it, the safest harbours have deep waters that allow ships of all sizes to safely dock. A shallow strand, however pretty, has limited depth for docking.

If, like me, you are working with clients with a history of developmental trauma or who experienced caregiving that was disorganizing of their careseeking behaviours, then it is likely that the work you do sometimes disturbs you. When we welcome clients with these difficulties into the open harbour of our consulting rooms, we open the harbours of both our heart and mind too. It is no wonder their disorganized careseeking can create confusion and confused feelings in us. Sometimes, we may find ourselves feeling useless, helpless, and even despairing about their capacity to take anything from us.

This training tries to honour the depth of the work that you do. We offer you a number of harbours in various experiential exercises, and reflective spaces throughout the training. Whether you volunteer to take part in any one of the exercises (it is optional) or choose to be an observer to those who do, you will find yourself in your, and/or their, deeper waters. By this I mean that you will experience strong feelings, have powerful memories stirred, may recall deep connections with secure memories that may evoke intense feelings of joy and sorrow in you. You may also recall memories that are more painful; moments of being misunderstood, perhaps even some of the experiences that were pivotal to your choosing to work with vulnerable others. Perhaps those experiences are key to your compassion for your clients.

As trainers and facilitators, we cannot know what is happening in your personal life right now. We also cannot know about your childhood experiences. Where you have come from is not known to us. Previous participants in our trainings who were going through significant life events (loss, recent trauma, divorce etc.), or who have had past traumas and worried these might re-surface, have found it most helpful to observe the real plays and not directly participate. Some, with those same difficulties have found direct participation helpful too. We cannot decide what is best for you. Either is absolutely fine. It is really important that you look after yourself during the training and seek support as and when needed.

We believe that it is important to know one's own deeper waters when working with families, and to be able to accompany them in their deep waters. It is my belief that any training worth its salt will take participants into deeper waters. However, many, if not most trainings do not provide space for us to reflect on this. To be effective in offering the Lighthouse programme, the parents, and clients you work with will need you to be available to them when the exercises you facilitate disturb their boats, unintentionally tip them into deep waters. Your capacity to support the clients going through the programme will be greatly helped, we believe, by participating in this experiential training with an expectation that it will generate much to reflect on, much to process or re-process. Many people who have trained with us have told us exactly this.

Not everyone will choose to train in this programme. It is not for everyone, it asks more questions than it answers, and it is certainly not *'the answer'* to every parenting situation and there are many, many other programmes that are excellent too. But if you do choose to join us, you will be most welcome, and we will do our best to create a safe enough harbour for you to learn some of the core skills needed to offer the parents you work with a deeper and safer harbour.

Gerard Byrne

