

The challenges of working with trauma in later life

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Level: Intermediate. Delegates will need a good knowledge of trauma-focused therapy but no previous experience of working with older people, just an interest or enthusiasm.

For the current generation(s) of older people, the social and political context in which they grew up and have lived plays a significant role in the way they experienced or experience traumatic events. Examples of this include the Second World War and its aftermath and the understanding of and attitude towards a child's attachments and abuse and neglect. These contexts need to be understood and taken into account when working with older people who decide to engage on trauma-focused therapy in later life for both past and recent traumas including trauma re-activated by an element of their current circumstances.

The manner in which those in later life may approach telling the story of the trauma and suggested adaptations to cognitive-behavioural interventions will be explored drawing on clinical experience, client studies and the current evidence base. Difficulties likely to be encountered in a potential therapeutic relationship such as specific transference and countertransference relating to working with older people and verbosity will be identified and addressed. Likely differences in presentation, traumas experienced, triggers, expectations and engagement relating to older clients will be discussed.

As a result of attending the workshop, delegates can expect to gain a greater understanding of the differences they are likely to encounter when working therapeutically with older people who have experienced trauma. They can expect to learn ways to incorporate these differences and helpful adaptations they can make to trauma-focused therapy to ensure its effectiveness including making CBT 'conversational' for example. They can expect an interactive workshop with opportunities to actively explore and discuss the issues presented as well as to answer specific questions they have about this clinical area.