

SENSORY ATTACHMENT INTERVENTION CENTRE

www.sensoryattachmentintervention.com



SAI FOUNDATION TRAINING

INTRODUCTION TO SAI: THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA
AND INSECURE ATTACHMENT ON SENSORY PROCESSING

*An Introductory Course for Professionals working Children,
Young People and Families*

Sponsored by:
LittleBrainsBigEmotions LLC

Course Author:
Éadaoin Bhreathnach M.Sc.
Consultant Occupational Therapist & Attachment Counsellor

Sensory Attachment Intervention (SAI) is an integrative trauma informed approach to the treatment of children, young people and adults who have experienced trauma, abuse or neglect. It recognises the importance of differentiating sensory, trauma and attachment behaviours and their impact on function. SAI follows the neurological principle of use-dependent learning, i.e. all parts of the brain can modify their functioning in response to specific patterns of activation. This is achieved through changing daily living routines in ways that are regulating. Sensory and attachment patterns of carers and partners are also addressed as engagement with others is a co-regulation process.

Course Overview

This course, six half days over six weeks, provides an examination of the theory and practice of SAI (Sensory Attachment Intervention) online via Zoom. A central focus is the critical impact of trauma and attachment relationships on sensory processing and on the capacity to co-regulate.

Booking information

Cost: **\$875 USD**

Please go to littlebrainsbigemotions.com for payment

Dates: 10/2, 10/9, 10/16, 10/23, 10/30 and 11/6 2026.

Learning Outcomes

- ◇ Gain an understanding of the theory and principles of Sensory Attachment Intervention (SAI).
- ◇ Learn the four levels of self-regulation, i.e.
Level 1: Passive Assimilation,
Level 2: Modulation of Arousal and Sensation,
Level 3: Interpretation of Attachment Relationships and Sensation,
Level 4: Organisation.
- ◇ Reconsider the regulating properties of sensation.
How the SI notion of what is considered to be regulating is challenged when treating those who have experienced trauma.
- ◇ Understand the impact of trauma, sensory processing differences and attachment relationships on the capacity to self-regulate and co-regulate.

- ◇ Gain an introductory understanding of sensory-attachment nosology.
- ◇ Gain experience of micro-analysing video examples of behaviours, from a sensory-attachment perspective.
- ◇ Learn the SAI framework for Clinical Formulation and Intervention.

Testimonials

"Fantastic, well-rounded experience, expanded my knowledge, challenged my thinking and provided me with multiple techniques."

"Information, practical, enlightening, useful."

"Enjoyed every minute, superb delivery interesting examples used through-out."

TIME TABLE

9:00 AM-12:30 PM

Eastern Time (EST/EDT): 9:00 AM

Central Time (CST/CDT): 8:00 AM

Mountain Time (MT): 7:00 AM

Pacific Time (PST/PDT): 6:00 AM

SESSION 1

Tutor Éadaoin Bhreathnach

- ◇ Selective Processing of Sensory Information, Our Interpretation and Disposition to Respond.
- ◇ Group Exercise: Video Analysis of Behaviour through different lenses.
- ◇ Self-Care: The Importance of self-regulation to avoid burnout and enable co-regulation.
- ◇ Grounding Exercise.
- ◇ Introduction to Sensory Attachment intervention.
- ◇ The Carer's contribution to the child's development, a sensory-attachment perspective.
- ◇ Contributing Theories:
A.J Ayres: Enabling self -regulation.
Alan Schore: Psychobiological Co-Regulation:
- ◇ **Break - 30 minutes.**
- ◇ Self-Regulation, Clinical Formulation Chart:
Introduction to SAI Levels of Self- Regulation:
ANS regulation: focusing on Interoception, SNS & PNS Stress Response.
Modulation of arousal and responsiveness to sensation,
Interpretation of sensory information and attachment relationships,
Organisation: use of attachment strategies, motor skills, & praxis. ADL & IADL.
- ◇ Intervention: Key factors that influence efficacy.
- ◇ Discussion.

SESSION 2

Tutor Claire Pemrick

- ◇ Overview of Contributing Theories Continued.
Developmental Trauma, Bruce Perry:
Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics
Key Areas of the Brain - a bottom-up approach.
Use-Dependent Learning.
- ◇ Porges Polyvagal Theory:
The Social Engagement System for Self and Co-Regulation.
- ◇ Group Practical: Still Face Exercise.
Implications for practice.
- ◇ **Break - 30 minutes**
Regulating Snack - choose your favourite snack.
- ◇ Facilitating Regulation.
Reviewing snack choices and their regulating properties.
Neuroception. Its role in encouraging curiosity and exploration.
Developing the Vagal Brake.
- ◇ Discussion.

SESSION 3

Tutor Claire Pemrick

- ◇ Transformation of Sensory Information.
Proximal and Distal Sensory Systems.
Identify the original source of Activation of Arousal and Activation of Adaptive Behaviour.
- ◇ **Break - 30 minutes.**
- ◇ Sensory Modulation and Discrimination
The principles of up regulation and down regulation towards health and wellbeing.
The impact of trauma: how stimuli can take on an aversive meaning and activate a fear response.
Changing the dispositional representation of behaviour to facilitate parent-child engagement. Video Example.
The role of sensory discrimination in lowering arousal.
- ◇ Discussion

SESSION 4

Tutor Chris West

- ◇ Group Practical: The Regulating Properties of Activities: The group will be split into 2 groups, choose a physical activity and explore its regulating properties and its potential to trigger arousal (hyper-arousal or hypo-arousal) responses.
- ◇ Introduction to Attachment Patterns and use of Strategic Attachment Behaviours.
- ◇ Feigning Regulation and Feigning Dysregulation.
- ◇ **Break - 30 Minutes.**
- ◇ SAI Nosology.
- ◇ Differentiating Sensory and Attachment Behaviours.
- ◇ Discussion.

SESSION 5

Tutor Chris West

- ◇ Haptic Exploration: A Sensory Attachment Perspective. Group Exercise.
- ◇ Sensory Processing, Development of Memory Systems, Reflective Integration.
- ◇ **Break 30 minutes to include Mindfulness Eating Exercise.**
- ◇ Enabling narrative expression. Use of "The Scared Gang are Asked to Tell" Resource.
- ◇ Defining a Trauma Informed Approach to Intervention.
- ◇ Discussion.

SESSION 6

Tutor Éadaoin Bhreathnach

- ◇ Review Learning.
- ◇ Use of SAI Charts for formulation and intervention.
- ◇ Group Practical. Clinical Formulation and Intervention Exercise using SAI Charts.
- ◇ **Break 30 minutes.**

- ◇ Video Analysis of a Case Study.
- ◇ Illustrations of SNS and PNS stress responses.
- ◇ Illustration of SAI Parent Child Engagement Sessions.
- ◇ Group Discussion

SAI TUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Éadaoin Bhreathnach is a Consultant Occupational Therapist, and Clinical Director of the Sensory Attachment Intervention Centre at Ash Cottage in Northern Ireland. She has worked in the Field of Developmental Trauma for over forty years. Her model, Sensory Attachment Intervention, was developed as a response to those who were unable to participate in the therapeutic process without becoming overwhelmed. She recognised that the key to successful intervention is regulation of arousal states via the senses and co-regulating relationships. Éadaoin's clinical approach has received international recognition by fellow clinicians. Her current focus is on collaborative research with academics and clinicians on how sensory processing and attachment patterns influence regulation of arousal states. In 2024 she was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by Sensory Integration Education for her outstanding contributions to the advancement and promotion of Sensory Integration education, practice, and training.

Claire Pemrick is a Consultant Occupational Therapist. She has a special interest in children's occupations and how they evolve, using both evolutionary and occupational science lenses. She founded the Jump Start Centre in 2011, based in Essex. It focuses on strengthening the family system, a core tenet of SAI. Claire integrates this with her specialist training in Internal Family Systems (IFS), including Level 2 'Intimacy from the Inside Out' training, and Relational Life Therapy. Claire is co-founder and author of the EcoSensory Therapy Model, an evidence-based practice approach to therapeutic intervention in nature spaces. She is a visiting lecturer at the University of Essex and is currently completing her Ph.D., researching the dynamic relationships between adolescents and their parents, and how their daily occupations are shaped by broader, interconnected systems.

Chris West is a Consultant Occupational Therapist. She is a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner, and a NeuroAffective Touch Practitioner. She is one of the co-founders of the EcoSensory Therapy Model, which uses local nature spaces for therapeutic intervention. Chris has over 30 years' experience of working with children, young people, and adults with a range of mental health, learning, and physical health needs. Her clinical focus is working in secure residential care with young people and adults who have sensory processing differences and attachment difficulties, often as a result of developmental trauma. In 2024 She was instrumental in establishing the first Regulating Garden in England, at Atkinson's Secure Children's Home. In 2024 Chris was awarded Advanced Practitioner status with the Centre for Advancing Practice, in conjunction with NHS England.