

 A circular inset image showing a close-up of two hands clasped together, one appearing to be an adult's and the other a child's, set against a teal background.

Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP)

What is DDP?

Children who have had tricky or harmful experiences of being parented are often unable to develop a secure or positive relationship with an adult. These children often learn strategies to meet their needs that in turn teach them what to expect from the world and how the world views them. These strategies and the information they learn from them stays with them and can present themselves as challenging behaviour when they come to live with new families or there is a change in parenting style, which can make parenting them feel difficult. DDP is typically used with parents or caregivers and their child; it focuses on improving the relationship between them to help the child feel closer and vice versa.

Who is it for?

DDP is used to help children who are living with adoptive families, who are in foster care or residential homes, and those living with biological families in which the parenting has become safe and nurturing. The work will focus on both the child and parent or carer and how they interact and connect.

What are the aims of DDP?

DDP aims to:

- Help create deeper emotional connections in the relationship between a parent/carer and their child.
- Help the parent/carer to make sense of difficult or confusing behaviour.
- Help the parent/carer and child to make sense of the child's feelings in the past and present, and the link between them.
- Help the child to understand that the parent's/carers' motives are different to those previously experienced.

What is involved?

Sessions will begin by parents or carers meeting with the therapist alone, allowing you to get to know each other and for your therapist to learn about you and your family. This can vary in time depending on your circumstances and the therapist you are meeting with.

The first sessions will aim to prepare the parents and caregivers for the child to join sessions. An understanding of embedding PACE in their parenting will be discussed to help the parent or carer feel equipped in later sessions.

Once the child joins the sessions the main focus primarily will be on creating a sense of safety for the child. Once this has been established, the therapist may begin to explore with the child events they have experienced and their thoughts and feelings about them. The parent or carer will assist the therapist to support the child in this exploration to allow the conversation to remain open and engaged. Gradually processing of trauma can occur and new foundations of trust and closeness can build between the child and parent.

For more information about DDP please visit:

<https://ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/dyadic-developmental-psychotherapy/>

If you have any queries about DDP or your sessions with Psychology Associates, please get in touch with us:

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