



Reflective Functioning Training at the AFC

Coding of 'reflective functioning' (RF) is a way to operationalize the concept of mentalization, which Fonagy and colleagues have developed into a core theoretical concept in our model of normal and pathological emotional and self development. The coding involves looking at thinking as revealed in interview narratives about important emotional relationships, to see how far the person draws on a psychological model of motivation, of what happens in close relationships - to what extent they think in terms of their own and other people's minds, feelings, attitudes, intentions and so on, when they try to understand their experiences. This use of mental state understanding has been shown to predict attachment status in an infant from the parent's Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), and to predict important aspects of that infant's later development, also to relate mothers' Parent Development Interview (PDI) narratives about their babies or young children to key aspects of the mothers' behaviour towards the babies, relating in turn to disorganisation of infant attachment.

The AFC offers two training courses in coding RF, the original coding which uses AAI narratives about the childhood relationship with the parents (Fonagy, Target, Steele and Steele) is currently taught by Mary Target, and Arietta Slade's RF coding of her Parent Development Interview, an interview about the parent's view of and understanding of their child, is taught by Michelle Sleed in the UK and by Arietta Slade in New York City. Broadly speaking, the former training will probably be of most interest to those working with adult personality and psychopathology, whereas the PDI-RF coding training will be more relevant to those who are working with parents of young children, and who would like to get a sense of the capacity of the parent for thinking about their own and their child's states of mind and about their relationship. It is not necessary to have learned AAI coding or administration to do the AAI-RF training, although for those who are trained attachment coders the RF scale functions as an additional AAI scale. Similarly, it is not necessary to be trained in AAI-RF coding to learn the PDI system, although it can be helpful.

If you have any queries with regard to the Reflective Functioning Training courses outlined here please email Jen Black jen.black@annafreud.org.