



Kerry Higginbottom

Health and Care Professions Council number: SLO4565

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists registration number: RC0016019

Personal Profile

I am passionate about facilitating and promoting communication skills from birth through to adulthood. I believe that every individual should have their speech, language and communication skills supported and developed in order to achieve their potential socially, emotionally and academically.

I have worked with a mix of age ranges, including adults, post 16, school, and pre-school, in mainstream, care settings, special school/college and community settings.

My work with children and young people with complex needs sparked my interest in AAC and a Total Communication approach and as a result, was part of a multi-disciplinary team for The Communication Aid project when first launched.

I have supported individuals using a variety of techniques including low and high tech AAC accessed in a variety of manners including eye gaze and joystick, social stories, intensive interaction and a wide range of interventions for speech and language such as Colourful Semantics and The Word Aware approach. I enjoy working with both individuals and groups, for which I have extensive experience.

I have worked as part of a multi-disciplinary team to develop the communication skills of children and young people with Social and Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) issues including attachment and trauma.

I am passionate about identifying and providing intervention for communication needs in order to support SEMH and this led me to lead a Speech and Language Therapy Service based within an organisation providing homes and education for looked after children aged 6 to 17 years old. I designed and implemented a highly successful service across both the care and education settings.

I have continued to specialise in SEMH at AT therapy and am enthusiastic in my pursuit of keeping up with the most up to date practice to support my clients in this area. I use a number of approaches, ensuring joint and multi-disciplinary working wherever possible for the optimal results for the client and my flexibility of approach and ability to develop therapeutic relationships with both the client, their family and their team is one of my strong points. I believe in the importance of emotional and sensory regulation as key to wellbeing and have undertaken training in approaches such as PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy), polyvagal theory and DDP (Developmental Dyadic Psychotherapy) to enhance my practice.

My role at AT therapy consists of medical legal clients, who have Acquired Brain Injury as a result of medical negligence, or Traumatic Brain Injury, working as part of an MDT. My specialism in SEMH has allowed me to support these clients successfully and I have developed an interest and skills within this role to support preparation for and support during

mental capacity assessments. Allowing people to have their feelings and needs known in this way is something I am passionate about.

I hold the position of safeguarding lead at AT therapy and, in this role, I have supported the implementation of the company's safeguarding protocols and guided staff through any safeguarding concerns and procedures.

Training is an area I particularly enjoy, both with parents, carers and staff, and have provided a wide range of training in both specific communication approaches such as Total Communication, SEMH and communication, emotional literacy and regulation, Word Aware, comic strip conversations and a variety of techniques for supporting speech, language and communication. In addition to face to face, I have successfully trained large numbers of Educational Staff through online forums such as Zoom and am a qualified Elklan tutor.

My main areas of interest are:

- Social and Emotional and Mental Health Needs in children, teenagers and young adults.
- Acquired Brain Injury including Traumatic Brain Injury
- Autistic Spectrum conditions.
- Supporting Emotional literacy and regulation
- Supporting adults, teenagers, and young people to develop their communicative potential.
- Facilitating the use of a total communication approach (including high and low tech AAC) for both individuals and settings from pre-school through to adulthood.
- Supporting children in the pre-school years with Speech, Language and Communication Needs.
- Early years and complex needs.
- Supporting capacity assessments.

Professional Qualifications

1996-2000 [University of Manchester](#): BSC (Hons) Speech and Language Pathology and Therapy Post Graduate qualification in Dysphagia

Employment History

[ATtherapy](#). October 2021-present

[Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist](#)

I am employed at ATtherapy as a Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist supporting individuals with brain injury and associated difficulties, neurodivergence and specialising in SEMH. My intervention is based upon the whole person and I am particularly keen to look at underlying causes to "behaviour" including sensory integration, trauma and communication difficulties. I have spent a year and a half managing and leading the AT Mentor team before passing this over in order to focus upon my specialist area.

[Timeout Children's Homes](#) January 2021-November 2021

[Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist](#)

I was employed to develop and lead a Speech and Language Therapy service for children and young people aged 6 to 17 years across the organisation's three (one primary and two secondary) SEMH schools and 20 therapeutic care homes. This included initial screening and assessment of all children in the company followed by appropriate intervention. I also trained and supported care and education staff to provide universal communication strategies throughout the day.

[ATtherapy](#). January 2018 – December 2020

Specialist Speech and language Therapist

I worked in the community and special schools and had a caseload of complex clients within the medical legal sector. This included specialist assessment, treatment plans and intervention for individuals of a range of ages from pre-school through to adulthood. The caseload covered includes individuals with a variety of complex communication, educational and physical and mental health needs including ABI and SEMH.

Intervention included group and one to one sessions, training for parents/carers and school staff and embedded intervention.

Twinkleboost 2016-2018

Speech and Language Therapist/Assistant

Here I worked within early years settings with both staff and children to boost all children's communication skills in addition to providing whole staff training sessions as part of a not for profit preventative initiative. I planned and wrote communication blogs, training packages and intervention plans for all staff.

Self-employed/franchisee-Jo Jingles 2007- 2013

Launched and ran a highly successful business providing music and movement classes to babies, toddlers and pre-school children promoting communication development from an early age through fun activities.

Rochdale PCT/Sure Start Middleton 2003 - 2007

Senior Specialist Speech and Language Therapist.

Lead therapist working within a multi-disciplinary team providing preventative and targeted intervention for pre-school children in the community, mainstream settings and a nursery for children with complex needs. My role was based within the Sure Start Centre with a focus on targeting those "hard to reach" children.

Rochdale PCT/Rochdale MBC 2002-2003

Secondment as part of the above job for two and a half days a week to the Area SENCO and Curriculum support team providing training and support for staff in pre-school, nursery and foundation stage settings.

Rochdale PCT 2000 - 2003

Paediatric Speech and Language Therapist

A generalist post based in community clinics, special, mainstream and pre-schools and a multi-disciplinary team providing AAC support and assessment for children with complex needs.

Training

- Elklan Tutor Training (Elklan)
- Talking mats
- Talking mats advanced training in sexual health and relationships
- Cognitive Communication Course for Acquired Brain Injury (CCCABI)
- Making SENSE of behaviour course

- Picture Exchange Communication System (Pyramid Education)
- Derbyshire Language Scheme
- Makaton training
- Certificate in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ACE Centre North)
- Communication Matters two day conferences
- Solution Focused Brief Therapy Training for Speech and Language Therapists
- The Listening Programme licensed provider
- Return to Practice –Speech and Language Therapy (Birmingham City University)
- Word Aware (Word Aware)
- Hanen (The Hanen Centre)
- Intensive Interaction (Together Trust)
- Talk Tools (DVD)
- Grid 3 training
- LAMP (Language Acquisition Through Motor planning) Center for AAC and Autism UK
- SEN law
- Bricks for Autism training- Bricks for Autism Lego Based Therapy Facilitator
- Mental Health First Aid and Awareness
- Techess Mobi training
- Using descriptive talking with pre-literate children with AAC (Gail Van Tatenhove)
- All mandatory training (e.g. safeguarding, awareness of mental health)
- Sensory Integration and SALT (A Chatter of Magpies)
- Understanding and Supporting Emotional Regulation (Autism Act) training.
- Understanding and supporting attachment difficulties and complex trauma course.
- Fundamentals of working with children and young people who have Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)
- Clinical report writing training.
- Developmental Dyadic Psychotherapy level 1
- Bereavement and loss training
- Secure base training
- Level 2 qualification in Counselling
- Emotional regulation (NAC).
- Sensory processing and sensory processing difficulties 3-day course
- Trauma and PTSD Brain Injury Group training
- Building Emotional Regulation Skills in Children & Young People (Beacon House)

Examples of training provided:

- I have planned and implemented training sessions for Education and Childcare staff on general speech, language and communication development and strategies for supporting this. These sessions have ranged from short after school sessions to full day staff training and courses run over six weeks.
- Total communication approach training including a range of AAC run for education staff in

schools.

- Training care and education staff in the links between SEMH and communication and strategies to support this across the day.
- Training school staff in ways to develop children's vocabulary throughout the day.
- I have run sessions over a number of weeks for parents whose children have speech, language and communication difficulties based upon Hanen.
- Aided Language Stimulation training sessions for educational staff.
- LAMP training for Education staff and parents.
- Core Vocabulary in the classroom
- Writing and using Social Stories.
- The functions of behaviour.
- Developing early communication through daily routines and a total communication approach.
- Training for other professionals and support staff on the effects of Brain Injury and trauma on the young person and ways to provide support.
- Communication partner training.
- Webinar on supporting children and young people with SEMH issues.

Additional Skills

I have completed my Level 3 CACHE Award in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools (QCF) and volunteered in a primary school for a day a week for two years, allowing me a better understanding of the classroom environment, the curriculum and the educational system.

I attend training run by The National Autistic Society and local Additional Needs Team providing strategies for supporting children and teenagers with ASC which I believe provides me with a wider approach to supporting children with ASC.

I am secretary and part of the team running the RCSLT SEMH North Clinical Excellence Network group which allows me to support other SLTs working in this field and to gain knowledge from joining in the network activities.

I have completed my level 2 qualification in counselling skills which enables me to provide extra support using appropriate techniques for clients, their family and carers.

ATtherapy

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