

Systemic ideas in practice (intermediate level)

I'd like to express my gratitude for the funding you provided for me to attend the above named course. The course was undertaken over a period of six months from April to October 2013 and consisted of teaching sessions, skills and practice workshops and time spent under supervision in a systemic family therapy clinic.

The main course objectives were

- To gain knowledge and understanding of the core theories and methods of practice that underpins the systemic approach and be able to critique them.
- To gain a better understanding of adopting a systemic approach when engaging with different families.
- To develop skills in self reflection in order to enhance ones approach.

Prior to the course commencing I participated in a weekly systemic family therapy clinic, which encouraged me to want to develop my skills further, hence undertaking the course. Throughout the course I continued to participate in this clinic where I gained vital experience allowing me to develop my systemic practice and thinking. My approach and understanding was further enhanced through live supervision.

In my practice, the systemic approach considers the referred young person in the context of their family of origin, their socio-political and socio-economic setting, culture and community, where their difficulties are seen as manifested by patterns of relationships as opposed to individual causes.

I consider that the systemic approach is an integral part of my practice as young people do not exist in isolation; therefore this approach allows you to understand patterns of behaviour, particularly difficulties in the context of families. It allows you to see past the young person as the problem, being labelled a 'problem child' or being diagnosed with a mental health problem, but rather explore the family dynamics, interrelationships and different perspectives held within the family, thus enabling the focus to be more balanced and shared within the family unit.

I qualified as a mental health nurse in 2008 and have worked within child and adolescent mental health for the past six years, working both in an inpatient unit and in the community. Having worked in these areas I am familiar with systemic thinking and practice. However, undertaking this course has been invaluable as it has consolidated my knowledge, skills and understanding of this approach and enhanced my overall clinical practice.

Whilst attending the course I was pregnant which brought with it its own challenges, not to mention the fundamental aspects of systemic thinking and how this impacts on ones own thinking towards family life, past and present. I am now a very proud mother to a beautiful baby daughter and hope this method of thinking will help me become a better parent.