

## **MSc Systemic Psychotherapy**

I am a Counsellor/Psychotherapist and a Director for an organisation providing Counselling/Therapeutic services for children and young people in Nottingham/shire.

I received funding from Foundation PSA for the MSc Systemic Psychotherapy course year 1 of 2 at the Birmingham Children's and Women's Hospital. This course involved weekly taught days, weekly clinical placement, and independent study across the year September 2022 to July 2023. This course covered direct and indirect supervision of clinical practice, the study of culture, ethnicity and gender narratives in systemic practice, implications and application to professional and work settings and sessions devoted to personal and professional development (PPD); this is in line with the accrediting body AFT (Association of Family Therapy).

Receiving this funding has enabled me to enhance my practice and develop my work with families. I have been able to develop my self-reflexivity and relational reflexivity, helping me to think about my intentionality when asking reflexive questions, relational interviewing and using systemic models/interventions/techniques; using the feedback from the family so that the therapeutic potential is maximised for them. I have also developed my knowledge and skills around the evidence base for systemic models/approaches for needs specific to the child in family therapy. For example, in my findings from my literature review I learned about systemic techniques/interventions that are used to engage children with ASC and ADHD in family therapy. This research highlighted gaps for further research/learning in the systemic field and shed light on adaptations to models such as Solution focused brief therapy, Narrative therapy and using adapted language (i.e., short sentences, simple questions), using images and play/interests which are more useful for engaging and working with children with these different needs. This course also helped me to develop a further awareness of cultural influences on families, myself and therefore the therapeutic relationship. How I can co-create a culture for change with the families and consider issues of ethics, prejudice, and power. Working in a reflecting team on the clinical placement for the first time was a huge learning curve, whilst it was a challenge, it was a rich experience of sharing reflections, learning, and ideas both for the families and for my team.

Working with the wider system has been less common in my practice in previous years, so to invite family members into counselling with their child or young person (where the child or young person was referred alone as 'the problem') has been a development from the course and my learning. The child's therapeutic experience and development has been enhanced by doing this, the results have been positive for both the child and the parents/carers. I have also been able to further reflect on my position and influence within my organisation, because of this we have developed systems that promote more multi-agency working and support for the family of the child or young person attending counselling. This is a positive move for my organisation and the clients we support. This course has continued to develop my self-reflexivity and tools pertaining to ethical issues and working with social differences that I come across in my day-to-day practice. I have also used systemic techniques/models that are adapted to the increasing referrals of children and young people experiencing both mental

health conditions and neurodiversity. I feel more confident to support children who experience developmental trauma and their families.

I would highly recommend this course to those who would like to develop their systemic ideas/practice to effectively implement them into practice for better outcomes for the complex needs of the children/young people they work with.

I would like to thank FPSA for their support, as without this I would not have been able to complete the course.