

I received part funding from the FPSA for the MA in Systemic Psychotherapy at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. The MA is a two-year course and the qualifying years of the Systemic Psychotherapy training. The totality of the course to qualify as a systemic Family therapist is 4 years. I completed Year 3 in July 2023 and will be embarking on Year 4 in September 2023. I undertook the first 2 years of my training with the Institute of Family Therapy and took a break before embarking on the qualifying years. The qualifying years of the course consist of weekly live clinical supervision groups, monthly training days, lectures, research seminars, and assignments over the course of the year.

I currently work as a Senior Practitioner in a Tier 2 Early Intervention Service within the Children and Family's directorate of a local authority. My role is to support children and their families identified as at risk of poor outcomes and provide early help for emerging problems to address risk factors and improve outcomes for children. Some identified areas are poor school attendance, physical and mental health issues, exploitation, financial difficulties, domestic violence, and parental conflict. This Master's level training has been transformative in equipping me to work systemically with families to address these issues. Systemic theories such as Narrative, Coordinated Management of Meaning and Attachment has been integral in helping me explore families' stories and contextual factors that contribute to the issues they are facing.

This MA has made a significant difference in my learning and performance, both professionally and personally, this is owing to the course content and clinical training. Personally, I have been able to increase my self-reflexivity in various areas, such as the lens I use to understand and gain context of information. Additionally, recognising biases, as well as gaining a deeper understanding of how my personal and professional experiences have shaped me. In my professional context, the course has given me a more comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of the literature relating to family therapy and systemic practice. This comprehensive knowledge of systemic concepts and techniques has enabled me to critically evaluate complex clinical issues and utilised a wide range of therapeutic skills and interventions to collaboratively support children and families.

Throughout this year, emphasis has been placed on widening my thinking and practice beyond the linear cause and effect to embarking on meta-positions. Along with identifying positions and beliefs to ensure my practice is anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory. This can be through introducing or facilitating discussions on issues of diversity, intersectionality, power and how these are either affordance or constraints to the outcome families seek. Additionally, applying a systemic lens to explore contextual factors, intersecting identities and experiences that shape individual, families, and communities in the hope to change outcomes.

Applying theory to practice, has bolstered my skills to not just engage with young people and their families but to also collaboratively and curiously explore, patterns, scripts, and life cycle transitions/changes that influence the choices they make, which is needed to promote positive and sustainable changes. My learning thus far has supported me to understand and utilise various systemic techniques and concepts, to challenge my own premise and that of others and consider other perspectives, while maintaining rapport. I am looking forward to learning more and imparting this learning on my colleagues and but most importantly support young people and their families.