

FPSA Report
MSc Family Therapy – Year 3, Leeds University (2023-2024)

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to FPSA for their generous financial support, which has been instrumental in enabling me to complete the third year of my MSc in Family Therapy. Without this assistance, it would have been challenging to continue my studies.

This year of training has deepened my understanding of how to translate systemic theory into practical interventions that support positive outcomes for vulnerable families exposed to trauma. I have learned to help families envision and move toward their preferred realities, with measurable improvements in family functioning and relational well-being as evidenced by outcome measures.

Over the course of this year, I have completed 200 hours of clinical practice, both as a lead therapist and as part of a reflecting team. My recent placements involved working with two families affected by intergenerational trauma, focusing on improving their relational dynamics. This work has contributed to alleviating symptoms of historical psychopathology within these contexts. The families have reported significant improvements in their functioning, outcomes that may not have been achievable without FPSA's support.

Additionally, my training has equipped me to disseminate systemic theory and practices through consultations with statutory services in education, health, and social care. These consultations have helped practitioners better support families by enhancing attachment, fostering collaborative narratives, and promoting healthier family structures and patterns.

A systemic approach has proven especially beneficial in my agency work as an early intervention strategy for families experiencing challenging child behaviour. By helping families understand the function and management of these behaviours, we aim to safeguard against declines in mental health within the family context. This work has been impactful in reducing parental shame, mitigating blame, and enhancing children's self-esteem.

This approach feels particularly urgent in North Wales, where CAMHS services are under special measures due to increased referrals for significant mental health concerns among children and adolescents. Reflecting on my experiences, I believe that working within the family context rather than focusing solely on individual therapy can be transformative. Addressing suffering within its sociocultural and relational environment often proves to be the "difference that makes the difference."

This training has emphasized the importance of adopting a social constructionist approach—joining with families rather than taking an expert stance on their symptomatology. These systemic principles have enabled me to build stronger therapeutic alliances, empowering families to identify and mobilize their own resources and strengths to overcome challenges.

In conclusion, I am deeply grateful for FPSA's invaluable support. This funding has not only facilitated my professional development but has also directly contributed to improving outcomes for families in need. It will undoubtedly enable me to continue supporting more families in the future.