

Msc Systemic Psychotherapy

I wish to thank the FPSA for its grant towards my MSc Psychotherapy course and offer my sincere apology for the late return of this report. In July 2023, I was awarded a late placement on the MSc Systemic Psychotherapy course at the Tavistock Portman NHS in 2023-2024 academic year. However, despite being awarded a small grant from FPSA in August, the tuition fees were beyond my means and therefore I had to make the difficult decision to defer my place on the course to the following academic year. As it was proving increasingly difficult to source the balance of the funds within a matter of days before the course was due to start.

Following my decision to defer, I have since made enquiries with both my previous and current employers as well as tried to search for other funding online without success. A number of other challenges happened as I have since changed jobs, moved to a different location away from friends and family and whilst this offered new direction to work with a different client group it has offered very limited chances to engage in therapeutic clinical work (systemic practice). Hence, I did not feel ready to re-engage in my systemic training having felt that I have been somewhat "at distance" from the practice for almost a year. This has been a challenge for me both in terms of not sustaining my love of the practice and feeling as if it were slipping away from my grasp in my current role but also the realisation that the longer one spends away from academic pursuits, then there is the tendency to delay one's return to the discipline of research, academic study and critical thinking.

Nonetheless, I have managed to acquire a (collection of seminal texts) in my small library for my professional development that I try to refer to or read chapters from time to time. As is relevant for my line of work or when trying to explore psycho-therapeutic explanations or hypotheses related to work scenarios. Particularly to draw on curious understandings regarding childhood traumas, impact of parental separation on children's behaviour, parenting children with neuro-developmental needs and families coming to terms with enduring mental health, domestic abuse or sexual abuse. I have also kept my student memberships going to access Context magazine or podcasts from AFT and other online resources.

I am hoping to reapply for the Msc programme once my job feels more settled as it would be easier to access the training and placements that will be needed. I also plan to try voluntary placements prior to the start of the course as a necessary means of reconnecting with the clinical practice and language of discourse in systemic family therapy. In order to place myself in the best possible position to not just complete the training but also to develop or flesh out ideas for research for my dissertation. As I think this will be a necessary step in any postgraduate course to think about what areas of practice I wish to conduct research or to develop my professional practice in that will expand my knowledge, therapeutic understanding and contribution to that discipline, however small. It has been thanks to the FPSA that I was able to dream the dream of becoming jointly qualified as psychotherapist and social worker. So whilst this dream has been delayed it very much remains an aspirational goal. I hope it can be realised in the near future.

I am also hoping to be able to reapply for funding to be able to achieve this goal given the costly nature of the relevant training programmes. As well as to explore placement opportunities within mental health settings or family therapy spaces. Speaking to my colleagues who went ahead and started the course, they seem to have found the training challenging and stimulating for good measure in preparing them for their roles as systemic family therapists in future. They have not regretted the late nights and weekends of study or writing essays or doing research. And this

something that I am feeling that I have delayed and would like to get back on the course to complete the training once my circumstances are more settled with work or it becomes easier to attend at a training provider.