

Intermediate Systemic and Family Therapy Training

- Intermediate Course in Systemic and Family Therapy
- Venue: Birmingham (Institute of Family Therapy accredited course, Birmingham teaching base)
- Length: September 2024- June 2025
- Award: Certificate of Completion (Intermediate Level)
- Completed: July 2025
- Current role: Mental Health Practitioner, CYPMHS (Children and Young People's Mental Health Services)
- Relevant background: Qualified paediatric nurse and Health Visitor, CYP Crisis Practitioner, and current role within CYPMHS therapeutic team and part of the Family Therapy Team.

Summary of Training

The Intermediate Course in Systemic and Family Therapy builds on the foundation level and provides in-depth knowledge and skills in systemic theory and practice.

- Aims: To further develop skills in systemic assessment, formulation, and therapeutic practice with individuals, couples, and families; to enhance reflexivity and the ability to use systemic ideas in multidisciplinary contexts.
- Methods studied:
 - Systemic formulation and hypothesis building
 - Narrative approaches, including therapeutic letter writing
 - John Burnham's AMT (Approach, Method, Technique) and social GRACES framework
 - Structural family therapy
 - Milan systemic ideas – including circularity, hypothesising, and using rituals/reframing to interrupt unhelpful patterns.
 - Reflective practice and relational reflexivity
 - Seminar leading and collaborative learning

Experience of the Training

This training has been invaluable for my practice as a Mental Health Practitioner within CYPMHS. It has:

- Strengthened my confidence in using systemic ideas with young people and their families.
- Supported the integration of therapeutic letter writing and narrative approaches into my everyday work. I particularly enjoy using narrative theory, and the course deepened my confidence and skill in applying these techniques.
- Enhanced my awareness of relational contexts and social GRACES in therapeutic encounters.
- Contributed to my professional growth in seminar-leading, which has improved my ability to present ideas and to contribute confidently to teaching and reflective spaces.
- Encouraged me to advocate for systemic thinking within team meetings, sharing systemic formulations and hypotheses, and fostering a more curious and relational approach in discussions.
- Supported my involvement in developing the Family Therapy Clinic at my base. This has included shaping the therapeutic environment and taking into account the AMT framework to ensure the space is responsive, accessible, and reflective of systemic values.
- Provided a foundation for my application to the MSc in Family and Systemic Psychotherapy.

Application to Current Role and Future Development

- I now use systemic formulations within team discussions and direct work with families, contributing to more relationally informed interventions.
- The course has enhanced my ability to advocate for systemic perspectives within multidisciplinary teams, enriching service delivery.
- My curiosity and confidence in asking questions has grown, helping me to generate new possibilities in conversations with families and colleagues.
- I intend to continue applying these approaches as I progress through formal psychotherapy training.

I would strongly recommend this course to colleagues working in CYPMHS or related services. The balance of theory, experiential learning, and reflective practice makes it highly applicable to everyday clinical work, and it provides a solid stepping-stone toward advanced systemic psychotherapy training.