

Systemic Intermediate level - Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust

I am grateful for the funding provided by the FSPA to undertake my intermediate Systemic training at the Tavi. Completing the course was a significant step in my professional development and has given me the opportunity to deepen my understanding of systemic ideas, while also challenging me to reflect on my own assumptions and positioning as a practitioner.

One of the most impactful areas of learning was developing greater confidence in using systemic concepts in practice. Through circular questioning, hypothesising, and reframing, I began to shift from focusing solely on the individual to exploring the wider relational and contextual patterns that shape experiences. This has enabled me to move away from “problem-saturated” narratives and to co-create with families’ new perspectives that open space for change.

The training also highlighted the importance of reflexivity and the use of self. I became more aware of how my own beliefs, values, and cultural positioning influence the therapeutic process. This has encouraged me to adopt a more curious stance, not only with families but also with myself, noticing how I contribute to the systems I am part of.

Another key learning was around power, difference, and culture. Engaging with these ideas has supported me to be more sensitive to issues of inequality and to think critically about how these dynamics play out in relationships. This awareness has strengthened my ability to create a safer space for families to share their experiences, and to hold multiple perspectives within the room.

The training has also enriched my role in multi-disciplinary contexts. I feel more confident in offering systemic consultations to colleagues, supporting them to think about cases in relational terms. This has been especially valuable in situations of complexity, where a systemic lens can generate fresh insights and collaborative solutions.

Overall, the training has had a profound impact on my practice. I now work with a stronger emphasis on relationships, context, and collaboration, and I feel more able to tolerate uncertainty and complexity. Perhaps most importantly, the course has deepened my commitment to maintaining a non-blaming, curious, and collaborative stance in all areas of my work.

Having completed my foundation year at the Institute for Family Therapy it was interesting to compare the different teaching methods at both institutions; I found the Tavi was slightly more confrontational (in mostly a positive way), for example we would have monthly group seminars entitled “Place for Race” where we would explore different ideas and themes on race as a group. This led to some uncomfortable but necessary conversations and realisations in relation to my own experiences and unconscious biases.

The course was structured into weekly sessions, consisting of a lecture and then a smaller seminar group where we discuss theory and on occasion put it into practice.

As I found with my first year of training, there were areas of systemic theory that I really connected with and others that left me cold. This definitely impacted how I engaged with the reading material

in the course; some of it felt meaningful and relevant whilst some of it I found dense and inaccessible.

The experiences have led me to undertake the final two years of study, back at IFT, to become a qualified Systemic Psychotherapist. I hope to bring all my experiences and knowledge to the next step of my training.