

Training: Intermediate Year in Systemic Psychotherapy at the Institute of Family Therapy.

I completed the course in July 2025 and achieved a Distinction.

For the last 5 years, I have worked as a mental health practitioner in the Transition Team on a CAMHS ward. My job is to work with young people who have been admitted to hospital in order to create and support a sustainable discharge from hospital. Initially, my role was to work solely with the young person in hospital. Very quickly, I realised that to support a young person's recovery, I often needed to work with their wider systems (including family, education, placement, community team and social care). Viewing a young person as isolated from their wider systems was doing them an injustice and not maximising their potential for recovery.

This understanding led me to study systemic psychotherapy and after my first year, I was hooked! I am incredibly grateful for the financial support I received from FPSA to continue my studies and complete the intermediate year.

Undertaking the intermediate course has greatly benefited my work and ultimately, the young people and families I work alongside. Not just in the skills and techniques I have learnt but also in the language I use and how I think about patients and families who exist within a social, cultural and political context.

Examples of how this training has benefited my work and the people I work with are:

- I was able to use ideas from the narrative therapy module to help a family and young person reauthor their experiences from 'we are a complicated family with difficult children' to 'we are a family who don't turn their backs when others need support'
- Using the learning from the attachment theory module (in particular ideas about attachment strategy rather than attachment styles), I was able to support a looked after child to develop a more compassionate understanding of herself and the relationships she has had
- I am better able to notice and talk about intergeneration trauma and patterns around shame, body image, parenting and how those things affect the family in front of me
- bringing systemic ideas into MDT and community meetings. It has been especially helpful in bringing curiosity back to cases where there is a single dominant narrative around the family
- thinking with families how political climate, culture and other social issues are impacting their relationships

Having completed the intermediate course, I am now starting my Qualifying Years training and so my journey continues!

I would strongly recommend both the course and applying to the FPSA for support. I could not have done the course without financial support and so want to thank the organisation and also the individuals at FPSA who answered all my questions and gave really helpful guidance.