

June 2016

Report of the first year of Masters in Systemic Psychotherapy at The Tavistock Centre

I am very grateful to the FPSA for enabling me to undertake this valuable training, which I would not have been able to access otherwise. The application process was clear, Katy was very helpful and I received the money very quickly which was a huge relieve for me. This has enabled me to focus on doing the course. I couldn't believe my eyes when I read that email, it was amazing indeed.

Course outline

The Masters at the Tavistock Centre is a two year part-time course, which will enable me to practice as a Family and Systemic Psychotherapist at the end of the course.

The course involves:

Monthly lectures to study the theoretical and clinical models in systemic therapy. Lecturers provide reading for these in advance. Small groups of students meet with tutors the morning after the lecture to discuss and explore the topic of the lecture and the reading. In addition, we have various seminars which are dedicated to the historical development of systemic thinking and to situating theory firmly within multiple contexts; race, culture, gender, class, power and self-reflexivity are key considerations.

Weekly live clinical practice supervision is particular to Systemic Training and my clinical placement was at CAMHS at the Royal Free Hospital in London. Consulting relationships between peers are encouraged in the supervision group.

There are regular sessions devoted to personal and professional development.

Moreover, students are required to have a clinical placement with systemic supervision working as a lead therapist with families, children and young people for 100 hours per year. They should develop a portfolio of using systemic techniques and models in their own agencies applying systemic approaches.

There is also an emphasis upon research and evidence based practice and development of a critical evaluative stance to evidence, through monthly seminars and workshops.

Impact of training on my clinical work

The course builds on the knowledge gained in the foundation training to deepen systemic models and make connections with practice. Some of the models include narrative, strategic, solution focused and also key ideas such as hypothesising, circularity and neutrality as well as techniques such as interviewing for intervention.

This course has provided me with an opportunity to think about my current working techniques and practices. It allows me time to reflect on how to be more helpful to the families I work with using systemic ideas. This has been very useful in my current work with refugee families, children, and young people as they often present with complex needs.

Moreover, the different learning contexts are enabling me to explore and understand connections between systemic theory concepts and their application to practice and so further helping me to develop as a more effective practitioner. In fact, I feel that I have

grown a lot in my ability and confidence to work with families with complex needs, families involving high risk. My clinical group has also enabled me to work with a different clients' group, young people from different ethnic background, which is a great opportunity for me to enhance my experience of working with families, young people & systems and to better attend to differences.

I have now been taking lead responsibility in working with others to promote systemic thinking and practice when working with challenging cases in a multidisciplinary context in my work place. I have been practicing these skills in my weekly clinical supervision group on the course as well.

Furthermore, this course emphasises the importance of self-reflexivity and the use of self in therapeutic and professional encounters. As a result, I feel like I am changing, not only as a practitioner but also as a person; I have become more thoughtful and reflective in all areas of my life.

In addition, the systemic papers have enabled me to further develop my systemic theoretical understanding for better interventions in making change in young people lives and their families.

Overall, this course has stretched my learning and my practice of systemic concepts. I have very much enjoyed the learning.

I am looking forward to doing the second year and qualify as a Family and Systemic Psychotherapist next year.

Many thanks to the FPSA for enabling me to embark on this journey.

Thankfully yours,

Nsimire Bisimwa
CAMHS Practitioner