

Systemic Practice (foundation)

My background is a registered Social Worker and I have spent the majority of my career working with adolescences and their families within both youth justice and mental health services.

At the time of seeking funding through the FSPA, I was working within a specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). I was fortunate to have an opportunity to participate within a family clinic, supervised by a Family Therapist. The part funding enabled additional learning alongside the clinic. The course took place over 12 months with lectures on a weekly basis. I found the recommended reading and easy access to presentations via blackboard very useful.

In the beginnings of the course I was able to able apply the theory and skills learnt into my practice through the family clinic, which helped to embed my learning. Unfortunately, due to COVID our learning moved online. However, I felt this transition was well managed and I do not feel it impeded my learning, although it did extend the course end date. The family clinic also continued via an online platform which I found worked well for the particular family I was supporting at the time; however, I can understand the barriers this may create for others.

Overall, the course developed my practice and understanding of systemic principals. The course content and tutor group reflection opportunities were invaluable. The tutor group provided a space to reflect upon our own experiences and also explore the ways in which the theory could be used in practice. In addition to set assignments, the course required a reflection log during the early stages of starting the course and towards the end. This helped to highlight the learning gained over the duration of the course. The areas I found most valuable was the importance of being aware of difference and also how our personal self can influence our professional self. I found the course to be encouraging of personal reflection in terms of thinking about our own family systems and how understanding our own lived experiences can improve the ways we work with families.

Since completing the course and passing in March 2021, I have moved to a forensic CAMHS team. Whilst contact with young people and families remains part of my role, I predominately facilitate professional consultations, and I have found the knowledge and skills developed on the course to be transferable to my current role.

I would highly recommend this course for any practitioner looking to enhance their skills and theoretical knowledge when working with families. I feel this course is also well suited to those with a social work background.

I am very appreciative of the funding the FSPA was able to provide. This improved my overall practice and the service I am able to provide to young people, families and other professionals.

Thank you.