

## **Advanced Certificate in Systemic Child Focused Practice**

I am undertaking the **Advanced Certificate in Systemic Child Focused Practice** at the Institute of Family Therapy this year to enhance my knowledge and skills within my practice. I am still enrolled on the course which started in October 2022. At the end of the course in June 2023, I will be able to register as a systemic practitioner. The course has a flexible approach to learning with both online and face to face content which has been invaluable when working fulltime. I attend twice a month and there are assessments throughout the course to embed your learning. Without the funding from Foundation for PSA undertaking this course would not have been possible.

As qualified social worker in a Local authority who are promoting systemic approaches when working with children and families this has supported not only my own practice but the ethos of the organisation I am working within. I started the course working in an early intervention team working with families who have a range of different needs and have already progressed in my position by offering reflective systemic practice meetings with two social work teams to broaden their knowledge and skills in this area.

As the course has progressed, I have been able to continue building on the year one course and my 'therapeutic relationships' with families. I am now further embedding the approaches, applying interventions, including curiosity and types of questioning. I have also noticed how my own values and bias's impact my work with a high emphasis on my social graces and in being aware of this has supported improvement in my self-reflexivity.

The child focused stream of the course has been invaluable adapting the mainstream focus of couples and families to working with children in various settings other than the 'standard therapy room' which has included managing risk, and in schools and the community. The course has provided an opportunity to broaden and deepen my theoretical base that I acquired in the Foundation Year, focusing on its application to my professional practice. There is a strong emphasis on attachment theory and its influence on practice. In addition to its focus on the main models and theoretical underpinnings of family therapy, the year's main thrust is the nature of the therapeutic relationship and the process of change.

I have benefited from the use of significant outside speakers alongside the tutors on the course and this Child Focused Systemic Practice course is the only course in the country to consider the application of systemic ideas in relation to work primarily with children, adolescents, families, and their carers. I have benefited from it as a stand-alone course to enhance my practice. However, this course does form a pathway for students wishing to move on to the final two years of systemic training: the MSc in Family and Systemic Psychotherapy.